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Peer mentoring for-profit college students

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PEER MENTORING FOR-PROFIT COLLEGE STUDENTS

by

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Abstract

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A peer mentoring program for new students at a for-profit institution was implemented at a campus over five quarters. Peer mentors with high GPAs were matched with students for eleven weeks to help with academic success. A Business Club was created to support the mentoring program and campus activities. A professor monitored the program and collected data about the mentors, mentees, and the program's initiatives. Qualitative and quantitative research practices were used. Most mentees completed their first quarter coursework and re-enrolled for multiple quarters. The peer mentors learned valuable skills that they will apply to their workplaces. The campus was positively impacted by Business Club and mentoring activities, with students helping each other outside of formal mentoring program.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

Table **Page**

Chapter One

Introduction

Student Expectations and Educational Trends

Twenty-first century college students approach college with consumer expectations for convenience, quality, cost, and service (Bordon & Evenbeck, 2007). Selective residential liberal arts colleges still support the historic ideal of a community of students and teachers dedicated to intellectual advancement. By the end of the 1990s, selective liberal arts colleges enrolled only 3 % of undergraduates in bachelor's degree-granting institutions (Levine & Cureton, 1998). Research by Cohen (1998) documented major educational trends in the second half of the twentieth century, including expansion of research activities and increased focus on vocationalism, or job training, of students and curricula. Vocationalism expanded to such a degree that many liberal arts colleges offered more degrees in vocational fields than other areas.

Continuous change in the workplace will encourage workers to enroll in classes to enhance their job promotion possibilities. Forty percent of all American adults take at least one college course each year to enhance their workplace skills. Colleges will be rated by various state and national agencies according to their retention and graduation rates, which will impact all types of colleges and universities, including for-profits (Dennis, 2004). According to figures from the National Center for Education Statistics, the "traditional" undergraduate, the 18-to-22 year old who has come to college straight from high school, attends school full-time, and is supported by his parents, has become the exception rather than the rule. Data collected by the National Center for Education Statistics through the Graduation Rate Survey, under the Integrated Postsecondary

Education Data System, is limited to full-time, first-time degree- or certificate-seeking students – criteria that include only 7% of University of Phoenix's students. Such an expansion in the number of students taking courses in higher education creates a highly diverse student population with different needs, but traditional universities continue to resist changes in their existing degree programs and time tables (Hussey & Smith, 2010).

Cohen (1998) cites data from the National Center for Educational Statistics showing that from the mid-1970s to the mid-1990s nearly 60% of all bachelor's degrees were in the fields of computer science, communication, business, engineering, and health. Students' choices of majors reflected their decisions to earn degrees that would increase their chances of finding jobs after graduation. There were modest increases in economics, political science, English, and biological sciences majors, and modest decreases in the fields of physical sciences, mathematics, sociology, and foreign language (McClean, 2004).

Dennis (2004) accurately predicted that by 2012, higher education enrollment would be nearly 18 million, up from 13 million in 2004. According to a website specializing in statistical data, 1,140 institutions of higher education enrolled 17,487,475 students in 2012 ("College enrollment statistics," 2012).Technology created new educational paradigms that change how information is transmitted. Research by Dennis revealed more than 3 million college students enrolled in online degree programs, with the University of Phoenix having 140,000 in total enrollment in 2003. Dennis found that for-profit school enrollment grew faster than at traditional colleges, and revenues at for-profits increased by as much as 30% a year.

A later study by Wilson (2010) analyzed higher education enrollment over a thirty year period and found a much larger increase than predicted by Dennis (2004). The University of Phoenix had 455,600 students enrolled by February 2010, with only the State University of New York having a higher total student population (Wilson).

Online Education

Online education has become an important part of the delivery system of traditional colleges. Over 50% offer online courses, and there are more than 1,000 degree and certificate programs that can be completed in an entirely online format (Dennis, 2004). The emergence of distance learning, distributed learning, and online learning should be viewed as a new fourth sector of higher education along with universities, residential colleges, and commuter institutions. Newer forms of delivery by for-profit agencies have forced traditional institutions to clarify what they do best and value as most important (Green, 1999).

More recent research conducted by Green (2010) shows that the number of students taking online courses rose from 1.6 million in 2002 to 5.58 million in 2009. Online students are nearly 29 percent of the 19 million students enrolled in all types of higher education settings, including public, private, non-profit and for-profit institutions. Online enrollment is expected to steadily increase, with students taking classes for all types of programs. Moore and Fetzner (2010) note that by 2007, “the 12.9% growth of online enrollments far exceeded the 1.2% growth of the overall higher education student population” (p. 3).

Several studies have shown the benefit of taking classes online and suggest the value of integrating them into the curriculum for all students (see Green, 2010; Moore &

Fetzner, 2010). Having large numbers of students taking online courses can create problems, however. Schools offering online courses need to upgrade their course offerings on a continuous basis, as well as hire and train new faculty and evaluate all faculty teaching online. Students may not perform as well academically in an online setting as they do in a conventional classroom. Online classes can also require colleges to staff more student support systems, in an effort to retain students who are taking their first online courses (Moore & Fetzner, 2010).

For-Profit Higher Education

An increased demand for more practical majors and course offerings came in response to a large increase in for-profit student enrollment. Research conducted by Wilson (2010) found that "enrollment in the country's nearly 3,000 career colleges has grown faster than in the rest of higher education—by an average of nine percent per year over the last 30 years, compared with only 1.5% for all institutions" (p. 1). For-profit institutions, also known as career colleges, enrolled ten percent or 2.6 million of the 19 million students attending degree-granting American schools in 2010.

According to Wilson (2010), since the 1980's, students have attended for-profit colleges and universities to learn the skills needed for "front-line jobs in high-demand fields, including business and health care, and later, cosmetology and food and secretarial services" (p. 2). For-profits have traditionally enrolled working adults who need to increase their skills to obtain higher-paying jobs and who do not have the time or flexibility to attend classes at a traditional school. Fain (2011) found that for-profit business models allow schools to respond more quickly to changing labor markets, thus

offering classes that are directly related to the workplace. For-profit schools "currently produce 51% of associate degrees in computer and information systems" (Fain, p. 2).

While there are many types of for-profit colleges, Floyd (2007) divides them into two categories; enterprise institutions, which are small and locally owned, and multi-campus corporations, with larger enrollment and online programs. Floyd describes for-profits as institutions with "very low costs of operation because of economies of scale, no frills but modern physical plants and equipment, and typically contingent faculty" (p. 122). The growth of for-profit colleges shows their understanding of demand and marketing, as well as effective and efficient allocation of resources (Henry, 2007). For-profits are expanding their student enrollment because they have degrees in demand by employers, feature hands-on learning, focus on customer service, offer year-round courses, and emphasize career possibilities (see Toma, 2007; Floyd, 2007, and Henry, 2007). Wilson (2010) found that for-profits concentrate on students and that course offerings and course schedules are based on student, not faculty availability. The enrollment process is more simplified at for-profit institutions, and more money is spent on ads on television, radio, and online (Floyd, 2007).

Graduation, Retention and Mentoring

Since 1990, American colleges and universities have increased their focus on falling graduation rates. Over half of all freshmen admitted to higher education institutions fail to graduate from the same college within six years (Astin & Oseguera, 2005). Most students drop out during their freshman year. Students face transitions or changes in "life, self-concept and learning: a shift from one state of understanding, development and maturity to another" (Hussey & Smith, 2010). Higher education

institutions should focus on desirable transitions while allowing some flexibility for their diverse learners. Education researchers advocate a variety of intervention models, including the development of effective policies and programs to increase the persistence rate of all their students (Bordon & Evenbeck, 2007; Tinto, 2007).

Institutional actions for helping first-year students include advising and mentoring, with the latter receiving the focus of many recent studies and university programs. Mentoring can mitigate the isolation or lack of belonging students feel when first beginning college courses. Putsche, Storrs, Lewis and Haylett (2008) point to research on the benefits of mentoring, including "increased retention, lower dropout rates, improved academic performance, greater access to academic resources for students, increased postgraduate opportunities, and improved personal satisfaction" (p. 514).

Retention is defined as "persistence towards degree completion," involving multiple year enrollment at the same educational institution (Oseguera & Rhee, 2009). Retention research in traditional college settings has demonstrated that the earlier a student is connected to a college's social and academic systems, the greater the academic achievement and commitment to graduate (see Dennis, 2004; Cohen, 1998; Tinto, 2007). One solution to early intervention is a peer mentoring program, which can provide guidance, support, and connection to the college that would otherwise be lacking in a new student population. Peer mentoring can also promote a college atmosphere that advances collegiality and collaboration. Students who are peer mentored benefit from a formalized interaction program because they reach out to other students for support and information during their college careers (Bordon & Evenbeck, 2007). Peer mentoring encourages student commitment to and integration with the educational process and the institution,

and the degree to which a student is assisted in social integration into university life is a good predictor of graduation potential (Treston, 1999).

Gibson, et al. (2000) along with Healy, et al. (1990) researched several eras in mentoring, finding that during the 1970s, corporations and government agencies started using mentoring programs. Healy found that during the 1980s, institutions of higher education, school districts and states all began using mentoring programs. These programs were designed to enhance the quality of faculty and administrators through the use of mentoring. During the 1990s mentoring moved to the student level, where students were mentored by faculty and staff, both in high school and at the college level (Gibson, et al; Healy, et al).

There are two broad categories of mentoring: formal and informal (Kram, 1983). Formal mentoring can be thought of as an established program, where it is not spontaneous and is guided by an organization. Informal mentoring happens more spontaneously and does not have an organizational framework (Terrion & Leonard, 2007). Peer mentoring involves a formal process with specific goals and defined boundaries. Traditional mentoring is done by someone who is older and more experienced through passing down information and knowledge. In this relationship, what is gained from experience is passed down from the older to younger person. Peer mentoring is much like traditional mentoring, but is done between people of relatively the same age, with one having more experience than the other (Angelique et al., 2002).

Researchers have developed multiple definitions for mentoring. Jekielek, Moore, Hair, and Scarupa (2002) define it as a sustained relationship between a young person and an adult, wherein the adult serves as an advisor and supporter. The very foundation

of mentoring is the idea that if nurturing adults work with younger people, those being mentored will become successful adults themselves. Rosser and Egan (2003) claim that successful individuals have had mentors who provided support and guidance; mentoring relationships are crucial for both personal and professional success. According to research conducted by Jekielek et al. (2002), Mavrinac (2005), Angelique, Kyle, and Taylor (2002), and Chao (1997), mentoring can increase attendance, improve attitudes towards school, reduce some negative behaviors, and promote positive social attitudes and relationships. Researchers note that the longer mentoring is sustained, the better the outcome.

Peer mentoring is modeled on the traditional mentoring model, in which an older, more experienced person serves a task or career-related function, or a psychosocial function, providing emotional and psychological support (Kram & Isabella, 1985). The traditional form of mentoring involves a situation in which the mentor is older and more experienced than the person being mentored. However, Kram and Isabella describe peer mentoring as a meaningful alternative to the traditional mentoring model.

The definition of peer mentoring used for this study is based on Kram (1983), who has conducted multiple studies on mentoring and its important components. Kram (as outlined by Terrion & Leonard, 2007), describes peer mentoring as:

> a helping relationship in which two individuals of similar age and/or experience come together, either informally or through formal mentoring schemes, in the pursuit of fulfilling some combination of functions that are career-related (e.g., information sharing, career strategizing) and psychosocial (e.g., confirmation, emotional support, personal feedback, friendship). (p. 150)

I will modify this definition in that age was not a determining factor in my mentoring study. Some mentors and mentees at the ABC campus were not similar in age; some mentors were older than their mentees, some were younger. Prior success as a student at XYZ University and the ability to share that success with a beginning XYZ student was a crucial factor in selecting all of my peer mentors. Overall, peer mentors were selected on the basis of their willingness to commit time, their university experience, academic achievement, prior mentoring experience, program of study, self-enhancement motivation, communication skills, supportiveness, trustworthiness, empathy, personality, enthusiasm, and flexibility (Terrion & Leonard, 2007).

For the purposes of this study, the following definitions will apply:

1. For-profit university, also known as a career college: an institution of higher-learning, postsecondary, that does not feature traditional college facilities or offer traditional college activities. There are no dormitories for students, no dining hall, no gymnasium, and no sports arenas. At the ABC campus of XYZ University, books and magazines are available for student use online and in print versions at Learning Resource Centers, which take the place of traditional college libraries. Classes are offered during the evenings, weekends, or online. There is an open campus computer lab and a common student eating area with tables and chairs. There are classrooms with desks and chairs, overhead projectors and whiteboards, with one computer per classroom dedicated to professor use.
2. Adult learners: students, male or female, between the ages of 20 to 60 years old, who have completed their high school education and are enrolled in university-level courses.

3. Peer mentoring: the process of assisting adult learners through their first quarter of classes at XYZ University, using undergraduate and graduate students with high G.P.As already enrolled at ABC campus for at least two quarters. Peer assistance involves acclimating students to producing acceptable college level work, including introducing them to classes' online and in-class format, offering help with APA formatting, note- and test-taking and providing advice in how to succeed as a beginning college student. Peer assistance did not include tutoring students in any subject.
4. Mentees: undergraduate adult learners new to XYZ University who elected to join the ABC peer mentoring program during New Student Orientations held at the beginning of their first university quarter; or, those who saw flyers posted about the program and asked for a mentor; or, those who were invited to join the program by the mentoring program director or other campus staff.
5. Mentors: ABC students, undergraduate and graduate, with high G.P.A.'s who had been enrolled for at least two quarters prior to becoming mentors; who were selected for their ability to relate to their peers and their communication skills; and who were actively participating in one of three ABC campus clubs, Business, Accounting and International Students.
6. Persistence: the act of successfully completing university-level work at XYZ university from the first quarter a mentee is enrolled through multiple quarters thereafter, until the mentee graduates or leaves to attend another university.
7. Success: a mentee's completing his or her first quarter classes at XYZ University with at least a 2.0 G.P.A.

8. Learning Community: the students who attend XYZ University and belong to ABC campus, the faculty and staff who work at ABC campus, and the activities of the campus itself, including various club meetings and events sponsored by clubs.

Project Description

XYZ University is a publicly traded, for-profit institution with open enrollment policies. It employs a rolling admissions practice, continuously matriculating students throughout the calendar year. Classes are held once weekly over an eleven-week quarter, usually in the evenings to accommodate students' work schedules. Currently XYZ University has 100 campuses in over 20 states. Each campus recruits its own students, who often travel among campuses to take courses they need to satisfy their program requirements. There are three core undergraduate majors at XYZ: business, accounting and information technology. Students can earn certificates, associates, and bachelors' degrees in these majors.

The focus of this study, ABC campus was opened in 2004. Evening classes are held on the first floor of a professional office building adjoining a major suburban mall. The only day classes at the ABC campus are on Saturday mornings. There are ten classrooms and ten offices for administrative and academic support staff. Similar to the other XYZ campuses, ABC has its own dean, director, business office manager, admissions officers, and Learning Resource Center Manager (LRCM). ABC has five hundred enrolled students who consider it to be their home campus. It is a mid-size XYZ campus with a mixture of students who are working adults, employed on a full-time or

part-time basis. Students in the brick and mortar and online classrooms are a diverse group, including different nationalities and racial groups.

Half of all ABC students are distance learners, with some taking their coursework completely online, and some taking one class in the classroom and another online. Most students take classes at least three quarters in a row. Upper-level students often take classes every quarter, without a break, until they reach graduation. The prevailing age demographic for ABC students is mid-twenties to mid-fifties. Most ABC students take courses to upgrade their workplace skills in order to obtain better jobs and accelerate their careers. Overall more women than men are enrolled at XYZ University, and this is true at the ABC campus as well.

Approximately sixty-five percent of all XYZ and ABC students are business majors. Other majors include (in equal percentages of approximately five percent) computer studies, accounting, legal, finance, hospitality management, and education (at the graduate level). Regardless of their individual majors, XYZ students take many of the same courses. Similar to traditional colleges, XYZ University adopted a Writing across the Curriculum standard. All courses, including math, accounting and computer classes, feature a writing component consisting of at least two lengthy papers written in APA format. Students are expected to be fluent readers and writers from the time they enroll in their first XYZ classes. Free writing and APA tutoring is offered at each XYZ campus to all students. Tutoring is also available from individual instructors in various subjects. Professors are expected to provide tutoring to their own classroom students as needed. Online students can receive this tutoring at their primary, brick-and-mortar campuses, where they register each quarter and pay for the courses they are taking.

Proposed Change

The goal of this research project is the creation and implementation of a mentoring program with peer mentors and mentees at multiple XYZ campuses to increase the learning experiences of both mentors and mentees. By implementing peer mentoring programs, I will be fostering the growth of dynamic learning and will be promoting better student retention.

In order to implement the changes I am proposing at ABC, I must use several leadership principles, including situational and servant leadership techniques. I will need to be open to disagreement and to listen carefully to those who oppose the changes. Fullan (2001) believes that leaders will learn more from those who disagree with them than from those who agree. Leaders need to be both authoritarian and democratic; they need to have good ideas, present them well, and listen to doubters. In Fullan's opinion, resisters are important for two reasons. They promote diverse viewpoints and are necessary when implementing change. Fullan stresses that it is important to build in different concepts and ideas in order to promote moral purpose and relationship building in the workplace.

In addition to being a good listener and using situational leadership, I will also have to use my ability to build relationships and transform those around me. Fullan (2001) sees relationships as organizing principles. In fact, all businesses need relationships in order to function as living entities. Fullan stresses the need for employees to belong to their organizations, as well as their need to make a difference in the world. Fullan notes that schools should become learning communities; they must also focus on creating collaborative cultures by emphasizing moral purpose, good ideas, and results.

Fullan cites many examples of emotional intelligence from studies conducted by Goleman (2000). Leaders will not be successful if they cannot connect on an emotional level with their followers and empathize with them. Fullan stresses that the most effective leaders are those who combine intellectual brilliance with emotional intelligence. I will have to use my proposed changes to transform the ABC campus into a learning community with peer mentors and mentees.

Need for Project

Creating a mentoring program will benefit the freshman adult students who attend all XYZ campuses, whether brick-and-mortar or online. Having a peer student mentor will enable freshmen to become more successful in their studies and remain in school longer, with the ultimate goal being graduation. Establishing a peer mentoring program at the ABC campus will serve as a benchmark for mentoring programs at other regional XYZ campuses, thereby benefitting large numbers of XYZ freshmen and increasing the overall student retention numbers at the undergraduate level. Peer mentors will have their leadership abilities expanded while serving in the mentoring program. Individual campuses will become more effective learning communities through the establishment of clubs, which will support the peer mentoring program and sponsor campus activities.

Conceptual Framework and Leadership Principles

My leadership abilities have expanded exponentially since I began my coursework in the doctoral program in Educational Leadership. In September 2008, I was promoted to acting campus dean at XYZ's DEF campus. After serving in that capacity for a quarter, I moved to the ABC Campus and reassumed my duties as an associate

campus dean. Being able to manage an entire campus' academic department gave me a much broader range of duties and responsibilities.

Servant Leadership

Since I had been at the DEF campus from its opening in 2003, I was able to use the principles of servant leadership advanced by Greenleaf (1977). For over six years, I had served in various academic capacities, as an academic assistant, full-time professor, and associate campus dean. I worked extensively to train and mentor several new deans, even as I taught five classes each quarter and began work on my doctorate. My goal was always to be a good team player at the campus and university level. In many ways, I was seen as a positive force by my students and fellow teachers, both in and out of the classroom. When the former dean left in the summer of 2008 to work at another campus, I was chosen to fill his position by everyone who worked at DEF. My co-workers saw me as someone who could lead them because I was proven and trusted as a servant.

According to Greenleaf (1977), a servant leader is servant first, someone who wants to serve and then makes a conscious choice to aspire to lead. This type of leadership is different from someone who is a leader first, and then later acts as a servant. The servant leader enables those around him or her to become wiser, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants. This rests on the assumption that the only way to change a society is to produce those people who will change things and address problems one by one. Greenleaf advocates that servant leadership is powerful enough to make all of those being led "grow taller; become healthier, stronger, more autonomous, and more disposed to serve" (p. 23). Such powerful leadership is necessary

for any leader to create a new and exciting vision of the world, or in my case, a better-functioning campus.

There are many ways in which I have changed as a leader since I began taking courses in Rowan's educational leadership program. Since January 2009, I have accepted many new challenges. I moved to a new campus, ABC, took on extra responsibilities, and began training a new dean. I have worked hard to become an important team member, and I have applied the concepts that Argyris (1990) has advanced. When I arrived, it was evident that the lines of communication between the dean and faculty had severely deteriorated and that no one was discussing the undiscussable. Professors were not following the mandated guidelines for class duration and were not preparing lessons that were appropriate for adult learners. Some faculty were dismissed; others were put through rigorous training to improve their instruction methods. The faculty behavior shown in this situation reflects what Argyris outlines in his sixth worldwide rule, which concerns people not behaving reasonably when faced with upsetting facts. Since these changes were introduced at ABC, faculty members have used many different defenses to avoid changing their teaching habits, including rejection, procrastination, and sabotage.

Servant and Moral Leadership

In order for meaningful change to take place, individuals need to become skillful at new competencies, thereby reducing the old, defense-ridden organizational cultures. I have learned to map the causes of problems that are occurring at ABC and then look at how they are covered up as a way to prevent further defensive behavior in the workplace. As Argyris (1990) stresses, if the causes of problems are bypassed and

covered up, this makes the problems more difficult to manage, and the same mistakes will occur over and over again. In addition, I have begun to apply the theories that Fullan (2001) advances on change and moral leadership as part of my servant leadership framework. Fullan notes that leadership today is very difficult, due to constant changes and the need for both leaders and followers to seek equilibrium in the midst of this change. Leaders who are immersed in Fullan's principles will become more effective and more committed to the changes being promoted. These leaders will be able to inspire collective mobilization to common goals, leading to the type of second-order change detailed by Argyris (2000). All types of institutions, both public and private, will continue to fail without good leaders and the types of changes they inspire.

Over the past year, I have adopted Fullan's (2001) concept of moral purpose leadership and have found in my own workplace that it involves both ends and means. I am learning to be a better servant leader, someone who leads by example. At the ABC campus, I always take the high road, and try not to criticize faculty and staff. I work long hours, staying later at night than other faculty, so that I am always the last person to leave the building. I work hard on maintaining a positive attitude, and I show an interest in everyone who works and takes classes at my campus. It is important to compliment everyone and support everyone as we put changes in place. I have learned that I need to expect the best from myself, my students, and other team members. I also need to respect everyone, both staff and students, and never show anger in a negative sense.

In addition to Fullan's (2001) concepts, I am also adopting the leadership principles advanced by Giuliani (2002) into my servant leadership framework. I am learning to care for everyone I come in contact with at the campus, and I enjoy learning

about them and their lives. I also volunteer information about my life and the classes I am taking at Rowan, and I ask for ideas about changes at ABC from students, faculty, and staff. In this sense, I am practicing the principles advocated by Giuliani. He stresses that one of the greatest sources of leadership power is belief. Most people, he argues, do not develop strong beliefs during their working life. Constrained by the day-to-day realities of office politics, pragmatism and fear, people do things because that's the way they are done, not because that is the way they should be done. Giuliani asserts that people in the workplace look to leaders for answers, and they need to know how their leader sees the world.

As I continue to expand my servant leadership skills, it is important that I focus on moral and purposeful leadership. Giuliani (2002) argues that most organizations are structured in such a way that they do not actually focus on a valid purpose. He argues that most organizations start off well, but over time lose focus on their real reason for existence. One example he gives in his book, *Leadership,* is the New York Education Department. Like most public sector education systems, the teachers' unions exercised an extremely large amount of power. Decisions about the allocation of funding, where to open certain schools, how to promote teachers, and so on, were made based on bureaucratic convenience and the views of the unions. The underlying purpose for which the Department was supposed to exist--educating children--was not at the center of the decision-making process. I have found this to be true also at my campus. XYZ University's stated purpose is to educate working adults in order to help them advance in their careers. There is, however, so much emphasis on funding, class sizes, and student enrollment that often the concept of how to best educate these adult students is lost in the

process. As a campus academic leader, I need to be the person who addresses the students' educational needs and speaks up for them during the cancelling and scheduling of classes.

Now that I work as an academic leader for XYZ University, I have come into contact with an influential group of people who are similar to those identified by Gladwell (2007). I have joined a group of influential leaders, a set of mavens, staff and faculty who have worked for a decade or longer with the school. These professors are like Gladwell's mavens, and they have a vast knowledge of XYZ's policies and operating procedures, some written, some not written. They head committees, award key assignments in work groups, and can make the difference in whether a professor is selected for promotion for the upcoming school year. At XYZ mavens can also determine whether a new program is put into place or whether a course of study is kept or retired; they are thus responsible for educational trends within the university. By working on teams and committees with these university leaders, I can become a more powerful and effective leader myself.

As part of the change process at ABC, the entire campus was painted and re-carpeted. This was necessary in order to emphasize the changes being advanced and to give the campus a new face. In the past, when students or visitors walked through the halls of the ABC campus, they saw walls that were filled with fingerprints and floors that were dirty and unswept. In addition, the desks in the student services area and Learning Resource Center (LRC) were extremely messy and filled with loose papers. The idea that an unkempt environment can produce lower expectations has been advanced by several leadership experts. Gladwell (2007) used the rapid decline in violent crime in New York

City, the story of Bernard Goetz, and the Broken Windows theory to show that small changes can produce stunning results in an environment.

While I have not been in situations this dangerous, I have noticed that keeping up with appearances at an XYZ campus, making sure that walls are cleaned, floors mopped, desks neatly arranged, boards erased, makes a major difference overall in students' behavior and attitudes towards their own learning experiences. Giuliani (2001) applied the Broken Windows principle when he was mayor of New York City and achieved impressive results with crime reduction, bringing both shoppers and permanent residents back to the city.

Servant and Situational Leadership

An important component of change leadership focuses on changing the culture of an organization. I am including the principles established by Schein (2004) as part of my servant leadership platform. Schein has written and conducted many important studies on the types of leadership necessary to promote meaningful change. He discusses the evolution of culture change, including how culture evolves in organizations and the problems involved with culture change in midlife, mature and declining organizations. Schein frequently writes about the dynamics of change and systems changes.

After creating and running my peering mentoring program at the ABC campus, I became more comfortable in my role as a situational servant leader. Hersey and Blanchard (2008) are the original proponents of situational leadership. This theory claims that no single style of leadership pertains to all given workplace situations. Rather, leaders need to change their leadership styles to fit the changing situations. Leaders' styles change with both the situations they face and the situations they are in. As a

campus leader, I have learned that the successful use of situational leadership relies on effectiveness in four communication components: communicating expectations, listening, delegating, and providing feedback. I will continue to put these practices into place while serving as the associate campus dean at the ABC campus.

As part of the process of advancing in my leadership skills, I am learning to become a better team leader. Lencioni (2002) discusses the problems involved with teamwork and focuses on five dysfunctions or problems within any team framework. As I work to introduce change and create new work teams at ABC, I will remember to focus on correcting these five dysfunctions, which involve trust, conflict, commitment, accountability, and results. As a servant team leader who is committed to change, I am learning to do the following: 1) introduce each change slowly but firmly; 2) insist on the value of the change; 3) explain why the change will take place; 4) explain why I am in charge of the change; 5) find people to help me create the change; 6) promote support for the change; 7) change personnel and the setting itself; 8) expect pushback: wait for the objections; and 9) keep promoting the change: put small details into place (Stowell & Mead, 2007). As part of the change process, I will also need to hire new people, train them personally, check to see if they are being accepted, give them daily tasks, encourage them daily, find others to train them, cross train them, and find major projects for them to do.

Research Questions:

1. In what ways will there be identifiable change in a for-profit learning community after implementation of a peer mentoring program?

a. In what ways will the peer mentoring program affect the mentees' academic performance and continuation rates?

b. In what ways will the peer mentoring program impact the peer mentors' communication and leadership skills?

c. In what ways will the peer mentoring program benefit the campus learning community as a whole?

Anticipated Limitations

There are several specific limitations to my peer mentoring project.

1. I will be running each cycle over the space of eleven weeks or one academic quarter. At the beginning of each quarter, new mentees will be recruited, primarily through New Student Orientations at the campuses. Mentees will work with their mentors for eleven weeks and then be asked to continue taking courses without the benefit of an official mentor. Eleven weeks may not be enough time for some mentees to develop the study skills that they will need to earn passing grades in their courses to remain in their degree program.
2. Mentees will be paired with mentors through the use of mentees' opening survey responses. Problems may result if mentees are not accurate about identifying their learning needs or if mentees are not able to meet with their mentors during the times originally agreed upon.
3. Only campuses in the Philadelphia region are currently receptive to my peer mentoring study. Each region in the university is headed by a separate regional dean. Each region functions as a separate unit and may or may not decide to opt into the mentoring program at the conclusion of my study.

4. I will be conducting the peer mentoring program in addition to my assigned duties as campus associate dean and full-time faculty. I will need the dean at the ABC campus to see the peer mentoring program as a valuable use of my time and efforts, rather than assigning me other duties.
5. I will need to rely on support from other campuses' faculty and deans to have a successful program outside my home campus. Some deans may not wish to develop a peer mentoring program at their campuses if they already have other programs in place or do not have the full-time faculty who want to sponsor the clubs or mentoring program.

Methodological Approach

I am using a mixed methods approach to my peer mentoring project. My main method is qualitative. There will be a quantitative piece at the end of each cycle, using data gathered from the university student database to reference mentees' academic progress at the completion of each quarter.

My population for the study will include undergraduate XYZ students at various campuses in the Philadelphia area. Each quarter there were no fewer than three mentors and 6 mentees per campus. I received approval from the Rowan IRB Board and XYZ University's IRB representatives in the spring of 2010.

Conclusion

Chapter one presented an overview of the peer mentoring study conducted at the ABC campus of XYZ University. Chapter two discusses the literature reviewed in preparation for the study.

Chapter Two

A Review of the Literature

Introduction

While disagreement exists about what peer mentoring is and how to define it, researchers do agree in several areas which are reinforced by the literature. Mentoring relationships tend to focus on the growth and goals of individuals and feature several types of assistance (Chao, 1992). There is general consensus linking mentoring with professional and career development, including role modeling and psychological support (Kram & Isabella, 1985). Mentoring relationships have been shown to be personal and reciprocal in other studies (Healy & Welchert, 1990). Overall, the expanded availability of online classes has changed the ways in which mentoring relationships are formed. As a result, researchers have begun to focus on the importance of mentoring activities for online students' success (Jacobi, 1991; Carlson & Single, 2000; Green, 2010).

Peer Mentoring Theories

The role of mentor has expanded to include mentoring roles by senior or graduate students, peers and friends (Kram & Isabella, 1985). Research has shown that mentoring relationships include different arrangements, including formal or informal, long or short-term, planned or spontaneous. Formal mentoring relationships usually have a third party who matches mentors and mentees (Chao, 1992). The focus of most mentoring research is on undergraduate students (Roger & Trembly, 2003), while approximately one-third of studies examine the impact of mentoring on graduate students (Bowman & Bowman, 1990). Only two recent studies analyzed the impact of mentoring from the mentors' perspective (Carlson & Single, 2000; Reddick, 2006).

Studies have examined a variety of students being mentored, including women, minorities, students at risk and first generation college students (Campbell & Campbell, 1997). Mentoring new types of students in different learning situations has also been examined, including students taking online courses and students with specific majors (Melrose, 2006). Nearly all mentoring studies have been conducted at traditional, four-year institutions. Technical and community colleges and for-profits have not been studied at any length (Crisp, 2009). Various mentoring studies produced results that were lacking in design and could not be generalized. Many quantitative researchers did not include a specific definition of mentoring that could be replicated in later studies. Others did not test or report validity of their survey items (Rodger & Tremblay, 2003). Some measured mentoring benefits through self-reported outcomes, over-relied on descriptive methods, or failed to use comparison groups (Carlson & Single, 2000). Many recent quantitative studies did not show how their samples were representative of their study population (Pagan & Edwards-Wilson, 2003). Other studies lacked a guiding theory during data collection and analysis (Ross-Thomas & Bryant, 1994; Sorrentino, 2007).

Campbell and Campbell (1997) conducted a rigorous quantitative study in a traditional, non-profit university setting which investigated the effects of faculty mentoring on minority students' academic success, as defined by a higher grade point average and retention rates. Students were randomly assigned into two groups, those who did and did not receive faculty mentoring. Those mentored had higher grades and had twice the persistence rates of non-mentored minority students. This is consistent with prior research showing the significant positive relationship between mentoring contact, number of credit hours earned, and grade point average (Astin, 1977). Treston (1999)

conducted a later study on mentoring, also in a traditional university setting, which showed similar results.

Most qualitative studies have focused on adding to theoretical understanding of the mentoring experience for mentors and students (Edwards & Gordon, 2006). Other studies examined how students perceived the benefits of their mentoring. Freeman (1999) enriched his study through prolonged time in the field, while Lee (1999) used rich, detailed descriptions to convey findings. Most recent qualitative mentoring studies have, however, provided limited descriptions of methods used to collect and analyze their data (Melrose, 2006; Wallace, 2000). Also, they have not provided information on data or method triangulation or member checking. Several studies focused on evaluating mentoring programs rather than examining the effects of the assistance provided to mentored students, including Bowman and Bowman (1990), Carlson and Single (2000), and Pagan and Edwards-Wilson (2003).

Overall, studies found a positive impact of mentoring on student persistence and the grade point average of undergraduates (Freeman, 1999; Ross-Thomas & Bryant, 1994; Sorrentino, 2007). One study by Rodger and Tremblay (2003) found grades were raised but not retention rates for traditional first-year students who were mentored at a traditional four-year institution. Their study lacked an operational definition which would have identified mentored students. Recent qualitative studies examined the experience of mentoring on non-traditional college students and the value of mentors for female college students (Budge, 2006; Putsche, Storrs, Lewis, & Haylett, 2008). Current concerns in mentoring literature focus on the lack of operational definitions for mentoring, which have been absent, vague, or not specific to study populations. In addition, other forms of

variables have not been controlled, including academic ability, high school grades, and familial support (Carlson & Single, 2000). The lack of member checking and triangulation in data collection is also a concern (Freeman, 1999; Melrose, 2006; Wallace, et al., 2000). Tools used to measure or quantify students' mentoring experiences were surveys which often were not valid in terms of construction or reliability (Sorrentino, 2007; Zimmerman & Danette, 2007).

Roberts (2000) conducted the most comprehensive recent study based on theory to explain the mentoring experience from psychological, business, and educational perspectives; his study focused on the importance of mentoring and the need for mentors in the workplace. Levinson et al. (1978) completed a study proposing that the mentor's most important role was supporting and facilitating the mentee's dream, a theory later developed in a study by Ragins and Cotton (1999). Kram (1983) has completed multiple studies examining two major functions of mentoring in business, including career and psychosocial functions (Kram & Isabella, 1985). Research validating the existence of these two mentoring functions was continued by Chao et al. (1992) and Ragins and Cotton (1999). Additional research conducted from the perspective of college students to test the validity of a career and psychosocial mentoring function by Green and Bauer (1995) found that factor analysis did not support the validity, suggesting that college students have a different concept of mentoring than those in industry or educational leadership positions.

Between 1990 and 2007 researchers worked to conceptualize mentoring within the context of higher education students (Cohen, 1995; Cohen, 1998; Miller, 2002). These studies obtained diverse perspectives and identified common mentoring themes.

With the exception of Cohen, little quantitative theoretical work has been conducted to test the external validity of findings with four-year undergraduate students. Ishiyama (2007) examined first-generation, low-income students, including minorities, to see how they perceived a formal research-based mentoring relationship. Students were asked about mentors' roles, benefits of mentoring, and traits of a good mentoring relationship. They were given career, research and academic support, and personal consideration.

Nora and Crisp (2007) identified four major domains or latent mentoring variables, including psychological and social support, goals setting and career paths, knowledge in career field, and role model specifications. The first variable is also considered in studies by Kram (1988), Miller (2002), and Roberts (2000). Kram posited that the mentoring experience included feedback from the mentor to resolve fears and other issues for students being mentored.

Recent studies have focused on for-profit higher education institutions, examining how they attract students and how traditional colleges could learn from them (Floyd, 2010; Toma, 2007). Additional studies by Marks (2007), Bordon and Evenbeck (2007) and Henry (2007) found that traditional colleges need to shift their focus from learning to commerce and see education as a business commodity. Hussey and Smith (2010) and Dennis (2004) studied the expansion in the number of students in higher education, focusing on transitions between high school and college. McClean (2004) evaluated the impact of curriculum on mentors and mentees. Astin and Oseguera (2005), Tinto (2007), Oseguera and Rhee (2009), and Moore and Fetzner (2010) studied falling graduation rates at American colleges and universities. Green (1999; 2010) examined both the early emergence of online education and the later explosion of online enrollment, considering

the effect distance learning would have on traditional colleges that do not offer online classes.

Adult Learning Theories

A large body of literature exists on adult higher education (Gibb, 1960; Miller, 1964; Kidd, 1973). It may be argued that higher education applies only to adults. However, it is common in literature to refer to adults as those over 25 years of age. Anyone younger falls outside of research and discussion in adult higher education and adult learning theories (Laher, 2007). More often than not, adult students also attend classes part-time. Andragogy is defined as the science of teaching learners who are adults. According to Knowles (1980), it centers on the individual adult learner. Andragogy posits six assumptions regarding the characteristics of adult learners. They are seen as more responsible, self-directed, and independent. They have a larger knowledge base with more life experiences, and they are more willing to learn if they can link prior experiences with new information. Adult students are also more internally motivated (see Knowles, 1980; Pratt, 1988).

In the last twenty-five years, a number of theorists have identified several principles in an attempt to build a unified theory of adult learning. The earliest of these theorists was Gibb (1960), who proposed that adult learning needed to be experience-centered, with experiences that were meaningful; in addition, learners should set goals that are reachable, with feedback given during the learning process. Much of what Gibb espoused was a combination of pedagogic procedures and learning theory. Following from Gibb, Miller (1964) identified six crucial conditions for learning, based on his belief that at higher levels of human development in adulthood, cognitive models of learning,

rather than behaviorist ones, were necessary. Miller argued that for changes to occur in adult students, they must be adequately motivated, aware of the problems with their current behaviors, have time to practice new behaviors to reinforce them, and have a sequence of appropriate learning materials.

In later reviews of theories of learning and their applicability to adult students, Kidd (1973) identified the concepts that informed the efforts of researchers on adult learning. These concepts derived from changing conditions in the learner's lifetime, role changes caused by social forces, and the egalitarian nature of adult student-teacher relationships. Kidd also examined adult learners' self-directing natures, the physical, cultural, and emotional meaning of time, and attitudes surrounding aging and the prospect of death to adult learners.

Gibb (1960), Miller (1964), and Kidd (1973) all based their arguments on adult learning through their own independent studies, without referencing other researchers. Knox (1977), however, produced a widely referenced study of adult development and learning in which he offered a number of observations. In Knox's view, adults learn continually and informally, with their learning achievements based on the educational context and the content and pace of learning. He also concluded that adults underestimate their abilities and often perform below their capacity. Additional longitudinal studies show retention of and an increase in learning abilities during adulthood, although cross-sectional studies tend to contradict this finding (Kidd, 1973).

An important attempt to identify the essential principles of adult learning and to put these into practice was a study conducted by Brundage and Mackeracher (1980). They found 36 principles and then developed planning and learning guidelines. In their

view, voluntary participation in education produces greater results, and positive feedback acts as a reinforcer for the pursuit of more learning. Typical points of personally significant transition occur at the ages of twenty, forty, and sixty, and adults are said to be most responsive to learning programs that relate to these transitions. Additional research by Smith (1982) reinforced these findings. Smith found learning to be life-long, personal, related to change and human development, experiential, and intuitive. In addition, four characteristics relate strictly to adult learners: they need to feel the need to learn, to relate what they are learning to past experiences, to learn at their own pace, and to learn without fear of criticism.

The theory of andragogy no longer receives the uncritical acceptance it once did. Questions are raised about the extent to which these assumptions are exclusively true of adults (Tennant, 1986), the extent to which self-direction is an actual versus a desirable preference of adult learners (Brookfield, 1986), and the conditions under which andragogy may or may not apply (Pratt, 1988; Rachal, 2002). Knowles himself came to acknowledge that differences between adults and children may be a matter of degree and situation rather than a rigid dichotomy. Nevertheless, the theory of andragogy is still accepted by many as a broad guide to thinking about adult learning (Merriam, 2001; Rose, Jeris, & Smith, 2005).

Even as self-directed learning emerged as one of the most challenged assumptions within andragogy, a body of theory and research on adults' self-directed learning (SDL) was evolving. Tough (1971) compiled one of the first comprehensive descriptions of SDL. Further studies have shown the frequency and sustainability of adults' SDL and have led to the development of numerous models of SDL as well as instruments created

to measure it (Merriam, 2001; Eneau, 2008). Self-direction has been alternatively conceptualized as a goal for adult learning, a process through which learning occurs, a characteristic of learners that may be enduring or situational, and an instructional model through which instructors in formal classrooms foster student control of learning. Not all adults appear to be equally ready for SDL, and individuals are not equally prepared for SDL in every situation. Variables like background knowledge and degree of confidence affect the level of support adults may need in their learning efforts (Pratt, 1988). In a similar fashion, Grow (1991) recommended that instructors match their teaching styles to the estimated stage of self-direction of their adult learners.

Another area of research conducted on adult learners focused on transformative learning theory (TL), which was proposed and revised by Mezirow (1997). This theory evolved out of research with re-entry women in higher education. Transformative learning theory predicates the assumption that most learners are not aware of the origin of the meaningful structures which compose their worldviews (Merriam, 2001). The focus is on changing the ways adults learn, making them aware of their learning processes so they can become more critically reflective and autonomous thinkers. Transformative learning is the process of affecting change in a frame of reference. In this approach, the student is as important as the teacher, and both must engage with their individual frames of reference (Laher, 2007).

Leadership Theories

The leadership principles which inform this peer mentoring project are servant, transformational and situational leadership. According to Greenleaf (1997), a servant leader is servant first, someone who wants to serve and then makes a conscious choice to

aspire to lead. This type of leadership is different from someone who is a leader first, and then later acts as a servant. The servant leader enables those around him or her to become wiser, more autonomous, and more likely themselves to become servants. This rests on the assumption that the only way to change a society is to produce those people who will change things and address problems one by one.

Argyris (1990) includes theories and illustrations about how organizations develop high levels of competency at avoiding real issues while focusing on minor problems. His main thesis is that managers at all levels operate in their own realms of reality, saying one thing and meaning another, even while they are attempting to implement meaningful changes in policies and procedures.

According to Bass (1985), a number of situational variables may increase the likelihood that transformational leadership will occur. Transformational leaders are likely to be more important in a dynamic environment that increases the need for change. Such leadership is also more likely when leaders are encouraged and empowered to be innovative and creative (Howell & Avolio, 1993).

Fullan (2001) believes that leaders will learn more from those who disagree with them than from those who agree. Leaders need to be both authoritarian and democratic; they need to have good ideas, present them well, and listen to doubters. In Fullan's opinion, resisters are important for two reasons. They promote diverse viewpoints and are necessary when implementing change. Many texts about leadership stress the value of purposeful leadership. Giuliani (2002) argues that most organizations are structured in such a way that they do not actually focus on a valid purpose. He argues that most organizations start off well, but over time lose focus on their real reason for existence.

The idea that an unkempt environment can produce lower expectations has been advanced by several leadership experts. Gladwell (2007) used the rapid decline in violent crime in New York City, the story of Bernard Goetz, and the Broken Windows theory to show that small changes can produce stunning results in an environment. Schein (2004) has written and conducted many important studies on the types of leadership necessary to promote meaningful change. He discusses the evolution of culture change, including how culture evolves in organizations and the problems involved with culture change in midlife, mature and declining organizations. Schein frequently writes about the dynamics of change and systems changes and addresses issues similar to Gladwell's.

Hersey and Blanchard (2008) are the original proponents of situational leadership. This theory claims that no single style of leadership pertains to all given workplace situations. Rather, leaders need to change their leadership styles to fit the changing situations. Leaders' styles change with both the situations they face and the situations they are in. Lencioni (2002) discusses the problems involved with teamwork and focuses on five dysfunctions or problems within any team framework.

Transformational leadership was advanced as a theory by Burns (1978) in his book on political leadership. Burns identified the process by which leaders appeal to their followers' values and emotions; he felt leaders should address ethical issues and mobilize followers' energies and resources to reform institutions. Other theorists joined Burns in his study of transformational leadership (Bass, 1985; Bennis & Nanus, 1985). Current theorists focus on more pragmatic task objectives rather than moral elevation of followers or social reform.

Bass (1985), a theorist in academic leadership, examined Burns' ideas on transformation leadership and wrote extensively about his findings in a series of studies and articles. His ideas were then widely adopted for use in nonschool settings and were studied in many different settings. Other theorists explored the nature of transformational leadership (Howell & Avolio, 1993) and its consequences (Kotter, 1996).

Wheatley (1999) notes that leaders can only effect change by changing their own behavior and attitudes. Senge (1990) discusses a way to achieve transformation between leaders and followers through personal mastery. If organizations create an environment where workers feel safe to create their own visions, where they can inquire, commit to the truth, and build toward the future, then personal growth will be seen as valued and worthwhile.

Evans (1996) discusses the need for trust in leadership by saying that transformation begins with trust. Dubrin (2007) states that transformational leaders need to adopt many of the tactics of charismatic leaders, including their use of vision and communication skills. For a transformational leader, vision is more than a forecast; it details an ideal version of the future for an entire organization or a unit.

In addition to the leader's personal characteristics and relationship with group members, transformational leadership also focuses on what the leader accomplishes. According to Leithwood (2007), transformational leadership includes four categories of practices, including charisma, inspirational leadership, individualized consideration, and intellectual consideration.

According to Redmond and Tribett (2004), vision is the most important piece of leadership and is the only way to bring about transformation. A leader must have a

destination in mind as well as a plan to get there, and must be committed to making the vision embraced come true. Bridges and Bridges (2002) agree and discuss why change is so hard for people, both at work and in the classroom, and why allowing time for transition is an important part of change. Transformational leaders cannot just order people to learn and change; transition is not just automatic but involves three separate steps.

According to McColl-Kennedy and Anderson (2002), transformational behaviors include optimistic visioning and coaching to increase the self-efficacy of individual subordinates. O'Neill (2004) notes that one trait all great leaders have in common is a positive attitude that provides daily inspiration when meeting challenges. Great leaders, especially transformational ones, don't worry about making mistakes.

Transformational leadership involves being proactive. According to Hesselbein, Goldsmith, and Somerville (2002), every organization has problems associated with growth. Intellectual stimulation can also add to the creativity and output of individual followers and teams (Howell & Avolio, 1993; Keller, 1992). According to Bass (1995), transformational leadership can be effective in any type of situation or culture.

The current theories of charismatic leadership were influenced by the writings of a prominent sociologist named Max Weber. Weber (1947) used the term "charisma" to describe a form of influence based not on tradition or formal authority but rather on follower perceptions that the leader is endowed with exceptional abilities. Over the last two decades, other social scientists have created their own charismatic leadership theories (Conger, 1989). These theories include some of Weber's ideas but in other ways depart from his initial charismatic principles (Breyer, 1999; Conger, 1989). .

Despite their positive features, transformational and charismatic leadership theories have some conceptual weaknesses (Beyer, 1999; Bryman, 1992). Examples of these weaknesses include ambiguous constructs, not enough detail of explanatory processes, too narrow a focus on dyadic processes, and omission of relevant behaviors. Other conceptual weaknesses include too little specification of situational variables and a bias toward heroic conceptions of leadership (Yukl, 2007). The transformational and charismatic theories describe how a leader influences the motivation and loyalty of organization members, which is relevant in any study of leadership. However, these theories can also be seen as primarily extensions of motivation theory, and more studies need to be conducted in how leaders influence the financial performance and survival of an organization (Beyer, 1999).

Another limitation is the overemphasis on universal leader attributes that are relevant for all situations. More attention is needed to situational variables that determine whether transformational or charismatic leadership will occur and how effective it will be (Beyer, 1999; Bryman, 1992). Overall, more questions about charismatic leadership have arisen than about transformational. The topic of charismatic leadership has been challenged from two major standpoints: the validity of the concept and the misdeeds of charismatic leaders.

Conclusion

Using peer mentors can play a significant role for college students during the first years of their college curriculums. More research is needed to establish the value of peer mentoring. The roles of peer mentors and mentees also need to be more clearly evaluated.

Peer mentors can help adult students become acquainted with the university, offer support, and give positive feedback and serve as good role models.

Chapter Three discusses the methodology and cycles used to collect data for a project on peer mentoring adult college students. Five cycles were put into place, and changes at XYZ University's ABC campus were evaluated. The principles of action research were employed throughout the change cycles and data collection.

Chapter Three

Methodology

Context of Study

According to Creswell (2007), qualitative research involves a natural setting, with the researcher being the key instrument of data collection. Multiple data sources are employed, and data is analyzed inductively. Viewing the data from the participants' perspectives produces an emergent design and holistic view of the phenomena being studied (Creswell; Mills, 2003). The setting for my study was the campus where I am currently assigned. I have been teaching for XYZ University for over fifteen years, first in the suburbs of a major metropolitan city in the eastern United States, then in another similar suburban area. After working at the DEF campus for five years, I was reassigned to the ABC campus in January 2009.

My population for the length of the study included 60 undergraduate and graduate XYZ students at ABC and additional XYZ campuses. When the XYZ university president and regional dean decided to implement peer mentoring programs and campus clubs at the university in 2009, I asked permission to create a program at the ABC campus. I decided to establish a Business Club whose members could become peer mentors and work in the mentoring program. I invited them to be part of the study through in-person meetings, campus-wide events, student club meetings, and new student orientations. The peer mentees ranged in ages from their twenties to their fifties. They included both male and female students of all races and nationalities. Students being mentored were undergraduates, since that is the majority of the student population at ABC. The peer mentors ranged in age from their twenties to fifties. There were both

female and male mentors. One of the original female peer mentors was a graduate student who obtained her undergraduate degree from the XYZ ABC campus and has decided to work towards her graduate degree while she is mentoring. Several other graduate students have also volunteered to be peer mentors. The pool of mentors varied from quarter to quarter, as mentors elected out of the mentoring program for a quarter if they were taking a difficult course or busy at work.

The project I developed is based on the principles of action research. I examined the problems facing adult learners who did not have successful learning experiences in the past and had difficulty remaining in college long enough to graduate. I was interested in evaluating the best way to educate and retain these adult students, who often leave XYZ University before they have completed their degree programs. As defined by Hinchey (2008), action research is a "process of systematic inquiry, usually cyclical, conducted by those inside a community rather than by outside experts; its goal is to identify action that will generate some improvement the researcher believes important" (p. 4). Action research is conducted using a mixed method approach, incorporating features of both qualitative and quantitative research. The research I conducted during my peer mentoring study used mainly qualitative methods for data collection, with several quantitative collectors at the end of each cycle.

As defined by Glesne (2006), qualitative research methods are employed to study "some social phenomena from the perspectives of those involved, to contextualize issues in their particular socio-cultural-political milieu, and sometimes to transform or change social conditions" (p. 4). Qualitative research is an approach that seeks to understand, by means of exploration, human experience, perceptions, motivations, behavior and

intentions that contribute to the development of empirical knowledge. It is a holistic, flexible, inductive, and reflexive method of data collection and analysis (Bodgen & Biklen, 1998).

Qualitative research is richly descriptive, using words and pictures rather than numbers to convey information. It involves numerous descriptions of a study's context, subjects and activities. Data in qualitative research includes quotes from documents, field notes, interviews, electronic communication and other combinations of data collection (Bodgen & Biklen, 1998). Qualitative research is characterized by a search for meaning and understanding, with the researcher being the primary instrument; it is an attempt to make sense of phenomena from the participants' perspective. McMillan (2000) delineates several common characteristics of qualitative research, including the study of behavior in its natural setting, the use of data collected directly from the source, the construction of detailed narratives that help researchers to know behaviors, and the focus on reasons for these behaviors. These characteristics were all part of my peer mentoring study. I conducted research at XYX campus settings and collected data directly from the participants in my study using various data collectors I personally developed. I constructed detailed narratives to study the behaviors of my study participants, both peer mentors and mentees, and I examined the reasons for these behaviors and the changes that have taken place as the result of the peer mentoring program.

Overview of Program Development

The peer mentoring program was developed and implemented over the course of five academic quarters consisting of eleven weeks at the ABC campus of XYZ University, beginning in Fall 2009 to Fall 2010. Each of the five quarters represented a

single cycle: Fall 2009 was Cycle One; Winter 2010 was Cycle Two; Spring 2010 was Cycle Three; Summer 2010 was Cycle Four; and Fall 2010 was Cycle Five. The mentoring program continued after that date, but data from those later time periods is not considered as part of this dissertation.

Cycle One, from September to December 2009, became the pilot quarter for the entire mentoring program at ABC. In August 2009, Dean G., the XYZ dean for Region Five, mentioned that the university president, Dr. S., wanted faculty to create peer mentoring programs. I volunteered to establish a program at the ABC campus. Since I felt that the mentoring program would need a base of operations, I decided that an ABC Business Club should be established, with mentoring as one of the club's focal points. XYZ University has strict guidelines concerning the formation and operation of clubs at any campus. C.P., one of the graduate peer mentors who played a pivotal role in the formation of the program, was tasked with locating these guidelines so they could be discussed at Cycle One Club meetings. After several meetings, during weeks three and six of the fall quarter, the necessary XYZ forms were completed to establish the club on an interim basis. The ABC Business Club began operation in Fall 2009 with ten members, eight undergraduates and two graduate students.

The campus dean and director who ran the ABC campus in 2009 agreed to the formation of the mentoring program, with the following basic guidelines in place. These guidelines were communicated to me during the beginning of Cycle One, and they were explained to mentors and mentees before they were accepted into the mentoring program. First, students were allowed to have peer mentors only during the first quarter that they were enrolled in classes at the campus. Second, mentors were not to tutor their mentees in

any academic subject matter; they were to provide help in developing good study habits and also help with any problems students had about getting started in their classes. Third, mentors were to show their mentees how to access and navigate through their online classes, as well as the online portion of their campus classes. Fourth, mentors were to show their mentees the resources the ABC campus had to offer, including how to use the open computer lab, find sources for the papers they would write, and how to use APA formatting and citations. After the first quarter, the mentor/mentee working relationship was formally concluded, and mentors moved on to work with another mentee individually assigned to them. Several mentors, however, continued to work with their mentees on an informal basis at the end of their mentoring arrangement, and all the mentors were interested to see how their former mentees were doing academically from quarter to quarter.

The mentoring program was introduced to those new students who attended a two-hour-long New Student Orientation at the beginning of their first XYZ quarter. Flyers about the program were also posted on several bulletin boards on campus, and power point presentations were given about the mentoring program and club membership each quarter. If a new student did not attend an orientation, he or she would be individually invited into the program by the campus dean or director, who were active in promoting the mentoring program and wanted it to be successful. Participation in the mentoring program was strictly voluntary, and mentees could opt in or out of the program according to their own needs. Once a mentee had completed his or her initial paperwork and been matched with a mentor, it was the mentor's responsibility to reach out to his or her new mentee and formalize the relationship, including times and locations to meet for

mentoring. Several mentors, worked with their mentees without meeting in person, though phone calls or emails. Most mentors met with their mentees at the ABC campus while also keeping in contact through phone calls and emails.

Flyers were distributed to advertise the pilot program in 2009, including the need for mentors. Eight students were interested in serving as mentors in the fall quarter. The process of interviewing the mentors took several weeks. All eight mentors agreed to participate in the New Student Orientation sessions in 2009 to introduce themselves as mentors and get to know the new students. C.P., a graduate mentor, worked with me to create the following forms:

1. Guidelines for Mentor: a one-page overview of the mentoring program at the ABC campus, including a list of mentor expectations. This form was used for informational purposes rather than for data collection. Mentors were given a clear set of guidelines on this form that they agreed to follow while participating in the program. They were not to provide help with homework or complete assignments for their mentees but were to provide guidance and support their mentees' academic work.
2. Guidelines for Mentee: a one-page overview of the mentoring program at the ABC campus, including a list of mentee expectations. This form was used for informational purposes rather than for data collection. Mentees were given a clear set of guidelines on this form that they agreed to follow while participating in the program. They were not allowed to request help with homework or ask their mentors to complete assignments. Instead, mentees were expected to examine their academic concerns, then request guidance and support from their mentors to help them become successful college students.

3. Mentor Interview and Application Questions: a set of ten questions centering on the student's reasons for becoming a mentor and possible background in mentoring. This was one of the first forms I developed as the program director. At the very beginning of the first cycle, a pool of mentors had to be selected and trained. One of the major mentor qualifications included having a proven record of academic success, including high G.P.A's. These interview questions asked why mentors wanted to help and how they would help, whether they were good listeners, if they had had a mentor in the past, if they would have liked a mentor as a beginning student. Additional questions asked about helping online students, being familiar with APA style, problems they experienced as beginning students, availability to meet with mentees, and any overall comments or concerns about the mentoring program. A detailed analysis of mentor responses to this survey appears in a separate section of this dissertation.
4. Mentee Opening Survey: a set of ten questions centering on the student's reasons for needing a mentor and possible academic issues that could be helped by mentoring. Mentees were asked to complete this survey when they first requested a mentor. They were asked why they wanted a mentor, what subjects they needed help in, if they had computers and what their greatest needs were as new students. They were also asked if they had previously worked with a mentor, how their new mentor could help them, what their fears were as students and what had caused them to succeed or fail as a student in the past. By completing this form, mentees agreed to work within the framework of the mentoring program and meet with their mentors once a week if possible. The last question asked for any additional questions or comments. A

detailed analysis of mentee responses to this survey appears in a separate section of this dissertation.

5. Mentor/Mentee Profile Sheet: a form for students' personal contact information and available times and place to meet for mentoring. This form was used for data collection about the best ways for mentors and mentees to connect.
6. Mentoring Progress Report: a one-page form completed during a mentoring cycle by mentors, detailing their mentoring work with their mentees
7. Matching Mentor/Mentee Form: a one-page form used to record mentor/mentee matchups. This form was used for data collection and helped track which mentor worked with which mentees during the duration of the mentoring program.
8. Focus Groups were held during each quarter as part of Business Club meetings to collect data on progress the Club mentors were making with their mentees. Data from the focus groups was collected in the form of minutes that were maintained as part of the Business Club records.

All forms were kept in binders that were located in the ABC LRC and were labeled according to the mentoring cycle they belonged to. Additional forms were created as the program progressed through the five cycles. An exit questionnaire was created online, at the Survey Monkey website, to gather final comments about the program from both mentees and mentors after Cycle Two, but only several mentors completed the survey so the information was collected through alternate means for Cycles Three through Five.

Description of Mentors

Overall, there was an excellent group of mentors in Cycle One of the mentoring program who were excited to be part of the program. The demographic breakdown

included a mix of male and female, graduate and undergraduate students. There were four females and one male mentor. Two of the females, P. H. and T. G., each had one mentee. The other three mentors, two females (C. P. and A.T. F.) and one male (D. L.), had multiple mentees. There were two graduate mentors, both female, C. P. and T. G. The only mentor who left the program after Cycle One was P. H., who completed her college degree that fall. Each mentor will be discussed in detail in the following sections, according to the total cycles they mentored, their roles in the program, the number of mentees they worked with and the success they had with each mentee.

C. P**.** was the only non-native speaker who served as a mentor. She is in her late 20's, very focused and energetic about being part of the program. C. P. was not very self-confident about her English skills but her confidence expanded through each cycle. She is a straight A student. During Cycle One, C. P. mentored four students, one male and three females. Three of her four mentees had maintained passing averages at the end of Cycle Five (see chart: mentees # 5, 6, 7, and 8). In Cycle Two C. P. had one mentee, female, who had an A average. She did not mentor in Cycles Three and Four. In Cycle Five, C. P. had one mentee, male, who had a B average.

D. L. served as president of the ABC Business Club during all five cycles of the mentoring program and attended all the club meetings. He helped write the Business and Accounting Club charters. D. L. was active in recruiting in new mentors and new club members. D. L. was the only mentor to have at least one mentee in each cycle. D. L. is in his late 30's, married, works full-time in the retail industry, and takes two classes each quarter at the ABC campus. He is a business major who has also taken accounting courses. He has a 4.0 average who works very diligently to complete all his assignments.

D. L. participated in the various campus activities that were held each quarter and often suggested new activities and guest speakers who might come to club meetings.

A. T. F. served as Business Club secretary for all five cycles of the mentoring program and attended all the club meetings. Along with D. L., C. P. and T. G., she helped write the Business Club charter and wrote other documents for the mentees, giving advice on how to succeed in their classes. A. T. F. was the only original mentor to write entries in her journal and keep exact, dated records of her contact with each of her mentees. She received her undergraduate degree in hotel management in the summer of 2011. She graduated with honors, earning a 4.0 average. A.T. F. is married and in her early 30's. She was very devoted to her mentees and worked very hard to reach out to them early in the quarter and give them advice on time management and classroom success. Her final reflections on the mentoring program were very helpful. She offered valuable suggestions about keeping the program and expanding it to students who need assistance during midterm and final exam time.

T. G. was one of two graduate student mentors in the first cycles of the program. She worked very hard with all of her mentors and was quite successful with the mentoring process. T. G. had a high grade point average. She was able to make an instant connection with her first mentee, guiding him through his first quarter classes, showing him the campus resources, and setting up a study schedule for him. T. G. offered constant encouragement to all of her mentees, showing them that it was possible for them to have academic success in their college courses. T. G. served as the vice president of the Business Club for four cycles. She helped draft the club constitution and set up the by-laws. T. G. actively participated in the monthly mentoring focus groups during club

meetings and took part in the ceremony to recognize the first group of mentees at the end of Fall 2009, Cycle One. Her final comments about working as a mentor were highly positive.

P. H. served as a mentor for the first cycle and then graduated from the university. She is a married woman with children in her 30's. She graduated with a high grade point average. She met with her mentee on a regular basis. P. H. was the only original mentor not to serve as a Business Club officer. She did not attend the club meetings or campus events. Information about her mentoring process was emailed to C. P. and collected into a chart format, along with information about all the mentees and their academic process during each cycle.

Additional Mentors

R. E. was a male graduate student who asked to mentor students with their online classes. He was active in the mentoring program but did not officially work with any mentees in Cycles One through Five. He is in his late 40's, very articulate and caring, with a strong desire to help new students develop successful study habits. R. E. often came to the campus on Saturday mornings and afternoons and assisted any students in the open computer lab with issues involving their online classes. R. E. is an A/B student.

C. J. was one of the youngest of the original tutors, in her mid-twenties. She volunteered for the program in the Second Cycle and worked with mentees on a continuing basis through Cycle Five. C. J. did not attend club meetings on a regular basis but did volunteer to help with special campus events once each quarter. In her personal life C. J. was very busy, but she made time for mentoring, saying that she wanted to help. C. J. is an A/B student.

B. D. was a male undergraduate student who was invited to be a mentor by D.L. B. D. is in his late 20's and works as a salesperson for a regional company. He took a practical approach to his mentoring new students. He was always in a good mood and very passionate about life and learning; he worked on passing on this love of learning to his mentees. He served as a Business Club officer after Cycle Five. B. D. is an A/B student.

S. S. was a female undergraduate student in her '30s who volunteered to mentor an online student during a campus recognition ceremony for honor students. She only mentored for one quarter and did not attend club meetings or campus events. S. S. is an A/B student.

N. B**.** was a male undergraduate who also volunteered to mentor an online student at the same ceremony. He is in his early 40's and is passionate about online learning. He mentored for one quarter but was later interviewed and remained committed to the idea of mentoring. He did not attend club meetings or events, since he took his own classes completely online and did not come to the ABC campus more than once a quarter to visit student services. N. B. is an A student.

A. T. was a male undergraduate in his 30's who also volunteered to mentor an online student and worked for one quarter. A.T. took classes completely online and did not attend Business Club meetings or campus events.

P. P**.** served as a mentor for one quarter before she completed her undergraduate degree in business. She is in her late 40's. P. P. had a 4.0 average as an undergrad. She works for a regional health care organization. She did not have a lot of contact with her mentee, attend club meetings or help with club events.

A. P**.** served as a mentor for one quarter, joined the Business Club but was not an officer and attended club meetings once a quarter. She is in her 30's and has a good G.P.A. Like R. E., she helps any student who asks for assistance in the open computer lab when she is there working on her own classes.

Cycle One New Student Orientations

In order to begin the mentoring program, I attended several New Student Orientations in Fall 2009 to see what concerns new students would express in this type of academic setting. The Orientation in September 22, 2009, was very interesting. The event started at 6:00 but ten students arrived early. Most of them went to the room first and then were sent to the Learning Resources Center (LRC) first to have their student identification cards made. The LRC assistant took their photos and spoke with the students about the clubs and the workshops available to them. The students were somewhat receptive to the information but moved on to the new student orientation room without making any comments. They were quiet and focused on the upcoming event. The comment made by the LRC assistant was that the new students who had their pictures taken were somewhat afraid because they do not know what to expect from their classes.

There were 18 students who attended this orientation, ten men and eight women. They ranged in age from their 20's to their 50's. A few were professionally dressed, having come from work, but most were dressed in casual, fashionable clothes, including jeans, tee shirts, and sneakers. No one was dressed in clothes that were ill-fitting, torn, dirty or inappropriate for school attire. They sat around the room. Food was provided; pizzas, sodas, and a dessert, and students ate first, then the campus director spoke and introduced his staff.

Each student received a packet of information about XYZ's policies, upcoming events, and classes available for the winter quarter, as well as information about the mentoring program and how to sign up. The dean addressed the students and introduced the mentoring program and the mentors themselves, who briefly spoke about the advantages of having a mentor in the first half of the quarter. Several professors spoke about the campus clubs and their activities.

After 45 minutes, the new students were directed to the computer teaching lab. They were given an hour-long lecture about the XYZ website and the information it contains. They visited 15 sections of the website, including the current student section, i-campus, the virtual bookstore, class scheduling, and other sites. They were shown an actual online class and asked to select classes for the upcoming winter quarter. At the end of the orientation, for approximately 15 minutes, the campus director returned to discuss financial aid matters.

At the end of the presentation, about half of the students left the campus and the rest went to the student services area to speak with the staff there or the deans in the academic area. The campus was closed to students by 9:00 p.m.

After the first New Student Orientation session on September 22, 2009, six students out of the 20 attending requested a mentor and were subsequently matched with a peer. As soon as all the NSO sessions ended, all the mentors and mentees were matched according to the needs and requests expressed by the mentees and mentors in their surveys and profile sheets.

Both mentors and mentees were given an opening questionnaire asking them about their desire to be a mentor or have a mentor. These questionnaires were carefully

considered and the following themes emerged: Fear, failure, help, class/ work issues, giving back. These themes will be discussed at great length in a later section of Chapter Four.

To prepare for Cycle One, I observed three New Student Orientations (NSOs). The first lasted approximately two hours and was the most informative. I was able to sit through the entire session and took extensive field notes. I have compiled raw field notes, typed them into lengthier field notes, and begun coding the data I observed into categories listed above. I conducted 3 in-person interviews with new student mentors and transcribed two of those interviews. The other three mentors filled out surveys which were coded in field notes.

I gave out survey questionnaires to 6 new student mentees and coded their responses in my field notes. Mentors and mentees were matched two weeks right before the fall quarter began. Five mentors are female; one is male. Each mentor has two or three mentees. Four of the mentees are female; two are male. For the each cycle, matching is based on students' majors and their availability of time to meet with their mentors. Five of the six mentors are undergraduates. All of the mentees are undergraduates who are attending their first quarter at ABC. Some were introduced to their mentors in person, some via email. All mentors contacted their mentees through various formats, from email to phone calls to personal visits during the first week of classes.

Cycle Two Winter 2010

The same forms and procedures were used in Cycle Two as in Cycle One. There were six mentors and eight mentees. P. H. stopped serving as a mentor, and C. J. began mentoring, working through Cycles Two through Five. There was an effective focus

group meeting in week one of the cycle, with mentors deciding that calling their mentees was a more successful approach than emailing them. Official permission was obtained from XYZ University to proceed with the mentoring program. I was asked to present information about the ABC mentoring program at the annual spring faculty meeting in Virginia. Due to various factors, this presentation did not occur, but I did present information to the Philadelphia regional campus deans and faculty. Deans and faculty at several campuses requested information. Slide presentations were created and given at the ABC campus explaining campus clubs, activities, and the mentoring program. Binders were established to collect all mentoring data, including the mentoring forms. At the winter party for faculty and deans in Philadelphia, I met with a faculty member, Professor S., for an hour and discussed how to set up clubs and peer mentoring at her campus. We discussed the type of club she would like to sponsor, how to recruit students to mentor, and set up a date to meet in person at Professor S.'s campus. The following week, I conducted a conference call to explain the mentoring program to the associate campus deans in Region Five. The call lasted thirty minutes, during which time I explained how to create the clubs and recruit both mentors and mentees.

With the help of C. P., I gave a seminar on ABC campus activities during the first two weeks of classes in Cycle Two. Also, working with the mentors, the Business Club sponsored a Graduate Recognition Day which recognized recent graduates from various educational programs at the ABC campus. The Business Club sponsored campus activities during weeks three, six and nine of the academic quarter. Focus Groups were held at Business Club meetings during the first and last week of the cycle.

Cycle Three Spring 2010

The same forms and procedures were used in Cycle Three as in the previous two cycles. There were nine mentors and eleven mentees. New mentors and mentees were added as a result of promoting the Peer Mentoring Program during the NSO sessions and during several seminars introducing ABC campus activities. The mentoring program was promoted during NSO sessions at the beginning and end of Cycle Three. A. T .F created several informational pieces for new mentees on successful study habits. Mentors started keeping journals about their experiences while mentoring. The Business Club sponsored campus activities during weeks three, six and nine of the academic quarter. Focus Groups were held at Business Club meetings during the first and last week of the cycle.

Cycle Four Summer 2010

The same forms and procedures were used in Cycle Four as in the previous three cycles. There were six mentors and seven mentees. A. T. F created an additional study aid for online students, titled "Online Student Success Tips." The mentoring program was promoted during NSO sessions at the beginning and end of Cycle Four. Mentors continued to keep journals about their experiences while mentoring. The Business Club sponsored campus activities during weeks three, six and nine of the academic quarter. Focus Groups were held at Business Club meetings during the first and last week of the cycle. There was a Graduate Recognition Day with mentor participation. Articles on peer mentoring were read and discussed during several Business Club meetings. Several mentors helped to explain the ABC mentoring program to other XYZ campuses.

Cycle Five Fall 2010

The same forms and procedures were used in Cycle Five as in the previous four cycles. There were seven mentors and fourteen mentees. An online survey for mentors and mentees was created but was not used for data collection. The mentoring program was promoted during NSO sessions at the beginning and end of Cycle Five. Mentors continued to keep journals about their experiences while mentoring. The Business Club sponsored campus activities during weeks three, six and nine of the academic quarter. Focus Groups were held at Business Club meetings during the first and last week of the cycle. There was a Graduate Recognition Day with mentor participation. Additional articles on peer mentoring were read and discussed during several Business Club meetings. Data collection began at three XYZ campuses where clubs and mentoring programs had been initiated.

Role of Faculty Advisor in Peer Mentoring

My role in the peer mentoring program was to act as an independent observer. I drafted the guidelines in conjunction with C.P., a graduate student who served as both a peer mentor and a part-time academic assistant at the ABC campus. C. P. was given permission to work with me on the peer mentoring program by the ABC dean who was the academic head of the campus during Cycles 1, 2, and 3. After I created and edited and published the original data collectors, including the opening survey questionnaires for mentors and mentees. I worked with D. L., A. T. F. and T. G. to create the documents for the Business Club, which served as the foundation and one of the operating centers for the mentoring program. All of the mentoring data collectors were created with the help of C. P. or one of the other original peer mentors.

In addition to developing the framework of the ABC mentoring program, I interviewed and directed all of the mentors who participated in the program. I monitored the mentors' work with their mentees using several techniques, including monthly mentor focus groups at Business Club meetings and in-person conversations with mentors whenever I met them at the campus before, during or after their evening classes. Forms were developed to collect data during the each quarter from mentors; these forms were used extensively during Cycles One and Two. After those cycles, mentors were more comfortable about giving feedback on their mentees at club focus groups and during in-person campus meetings. Mentors also shared information on their own about how to contact each other's mentees

At the end of every cycle, C. P. and I met to examine the academic status of each mentee. This information was recorded in separate loose leaf binders that were kept in the ABC Learning Resource Center. I informed mentors about their mentees' grade point averages during the first focus group of the next cycle, which occurred during week 3 at the Business Club meeting.

The Recruitment Process

The recruitment efforts for mentees included posting flyers around campus and speaking to new students at selected New Student Orientations (NSOs) at the beginning of each quarter. Peer mentors attended the NSOs to explain the mentoring program and introduce themselves personally to the prospective mentees. New students were also individually assigned a mentor at the discretion of the ABC campus dean, associate dean or director. Information about the mentoring program and information packets were kept at the front desk of the ABC Learning Resource Center (LRC). One of the graduate

student peer mentors, C. P., worked in the LRC and served as the student mentor coordinator. In addition to being a mentor for several cycles, C. P. compiled pertinent information about the mentoring program and then arranged the data into separate binders labeled according to each cycle.

The recruitment efforts for mentors were not as extensive as for mentees. The original mentors were chosen to work in the program because of their outstanding academic skills, high grade point averages, passion for learning, and desire to help new students succeed. All of the original mentors were well known by the faculty mentoring program director; they did not self-select into the program. Each original mentor was individually interviewed or filled out a ten-point questionnaire about his or her reasons for becoming a mentor. The original mentors played key roles in founding several clubs at ABC campus and continued to serve in those roles, as club presidents, vice presidents, and secretaries, during the course of the program cycles. Later mentors came into the program through recommendations from original mentors or through self-selection, once they had been introduced to the program. Later mentors did not participate in club activities to the extent that the original mentors did but were asked to contribute in some way to a quarterly activity.

Slide presentations were given during Cycles 1, 2, and 3 to explain the peer mentoring program and various campus clubs and activities to ABC campus students at the beginning of each cycle. At the end of these presentations, students were given the opportunity to join the program as mentors, if they met the same criteria as the original mentors. Some students who wanted to become new mentors were not selected to work in the program in the last two cycles, due to a lower number of prospective mentees. These

students completed the necessary paperwork, including an initial mentoring questionnaire, and their contact information was kept on file for future work with mentees.

My Role in Study

Direct observation is employed in qualitative research for the purposes of data collection and involves observations in the research environment where change or improvement is attempted. Direct observations are recorded in journals or field notes. There are several types of direct observation, depending on the role of the researcher in the study. A participant observer makes observations as "a genuine participant in the activity being studied" (McMillan, 1996, p. 245). Mills (2003) labels this active participation. If the involvement of the researcher is limited, this is the work of an observer participant (McMillian) or privileged active observer (Mills). For the purposes of this study, I was a privileged active observer. I was actively involved with data collection throughout all the cycles of the research but was not present during all of the interaction between the mentors and mentees as the study was taking place.

There are various methods for gathering information in qualitative research. Interviews are used to examine participants' points of view, their thoughts, and their behavior in certain settings (McMillan, 1996). To provide a broad range of information, interviews for qualitative research are typically unstructured, with the researcher conducting personal or phone interviews with participants, asking them several general questions intended to elicit views or opinions in an open format.

Structured interviews were conducted with all peer mentors in my study prior to their becoming mentors. Each mentor was asked ten questions about mentoring and their

commitment to the peer mentoring program. These ten questions centered on three main aspects of the mentoring process. Mentors were asked if they had had mentors in their own lives, why they chose to become mentors, and how they hoped to help their future mentees. Mentors were either interviewed by me for 30 to 40 minutes, or they were given the set of interview questions to answer on their own if they were not available for a personal interview. All mentors' answers were kept on file in a notebook in the ABC Learning Center.

Prospective mentees were given a different set of ten questions to complete prior to being accepted into the mentoring program. The mentees were asked if they had had a mentor previously, why they wanted a mentor, and in what academic areas they needed the mentor's assistance. The mentees' answers to these questions were used to match them to a mentor who would be the best person to work with them for their first eleven-week quarter as an ABC student. Mentees were interviewed in person by me or C.P., or they were given the set of ten interview questions to complete as a one-page questionnaire. All mentees' answers were kept on file in a notebook in the ABC Learning Center.

Matching Mentors and Mentees

Mentors and mentees were matched according to their availability to meet with mentors (days of the week), the types of classes they were taking (online or on campus), and the needs they had indicated on their initial mentee surveys. Gender, age, or race of mentee did not factor into the matching process. Before each cycle began, I met with C. P. to look over the mentee surveys and determine who would be matched with whom. In Cycle One, each mentor received at least several mentees. As the program progressed

through the cycles and more mentors joined, mentors would work with only one or two mentees. Each mentor had his or her own special approach to their mentees. For example, A. T. F. shared her own organization techniques to studying, which she later expanded and posted as a list on the ABC student lounge bulletin board. D. L. offered moral support and high energy; he was always excited about learning new information as a student, and he passed this excitement on to his mentees. C. P., with her background in writing as a graduate student, provided focus and understanding of the writing process for the many papers required in the classes each mentee took.

Difficulties Experienced as Mentors and Mentees

Some mentees could not be easily contacted, especially at the beginning of cycles. They had indicated that they wanted to work with a mentor, completed the opening mentee survey form, and given out contact information before classes started. However, when mentors called or emailed these mentees, it was impossible to reach them. Forms had been developed to collect data during the each quarter from mentors; these forms were used extensively at the opening of the mentoring program, during Cycles One and Two. After those cycles, mentors provided feedback on their mentees at club focus groups and during in-person campus meetings. Mentors also shared information on their own about how to contact each other's mentees

Meeting Mentees' Needs

Mentors were very invested in the program's success. They tracked their mentees' academic progress from quarter to quarter. If one mentor could not reach a mentee, another mentor would be asked or would volunteer to step in and work with that mentee. Because of her campus availability and knowledge of research techniques and

scholarly databases, C. P. assisted anyone who was a current mentee, whether or not that person had been assigned to her. Other mentors then followed C. P.'s lead, especially D. L., who worked on his online classes in the ABC open computer lab. D. L. would help any student who asked for assistance in the computer lab, and he would ask his new mentees to meet him in the computer lab for opening mentoring instruction. R. E., a graduate mentor who worked with online students and took online classes, used the open computer lab as his own mentoring site, especially on Saturday mornings, and in doing so actively promoted the mentoring program and expanded its outreach beyond the original mentees. R. E. had received training as a mentor at several workplaces. T. G. also used the open computer lab to meet with her mentees. She showed them the campus layout and explained the resources in the ABC Learning Center. T. G. sat next to her mentees as they worked on the computer aspect of their courses. In her final mentor survey, T. G. noted that her first mentee, in Cycle One, was now typing better than she was.

Maintaining Engagement

For Cycle One, data was collected to measure the type of transactions occurring between mentors and mentees. This data was used as a measuring tool at midterm and final exam weeks to see how many meetings between mentor and mentee are required and how many meetings need to be in-person versus email or phone calls in order to keep students engaged and attending their classes. Mentors and mentees met in various ways during the first week. One mentor, T. G., took her mentee on a tour of the campus during the first week of class. She stated that she "wished she had had a mentor when she started taking classes." Another mentor, C. P., met with her mentees on campus, showed the

students how to access their online classes and how to obtain books and other classroom materials.

D. L. reached his mentees via email and phone calls. He was the most anxious about the mentoring process and has been in contact with me several times a week over the past four weeks. He was not able to reach two of his mentors readily, so he created an email stating what to do to be successful in classes over the first two weeks of the fall quarter. One mentor, a female in her 30's, did not attend classes at the ABC campus during Cycle One but was in contact with her mentee via email. The mentee, male in his 20's, worked at the ABC campus. He had already failed two classes and was retaking the same courses this quarter. This mentee was taking classes entirely online. He accessed his classes last week but had not done so this week. He was in trouble at midterm time, so he was assigned an additional mentor, C. P., who worked on campus and who could confirm that he visited the open computer lab and was actively working on his classes. Using multiple ways to contact mentees and staying in constant touch were the two most effective means of maintaining engagement between mentors and mentees

Common Themes and Goals Emerged from Opening Mentor and Mentee Surveys

This is a list of key words and behaviors that emerged after an analysis of the mentor and mentee surveys at the beginning of Cycle One. Mentors and mentees were asked a series of ten questions that discussed their reasons for being in the program and what they hoped to accomplish overall. Mentors' answers were more detailed and thoughtful than the mentees, who answered each of their ten questions with brief statements.

1. Mentor Help Time Management MHTM: 2 mentors
2. Help Time Management HTM: 2 mentors; 7 mentees

3. Mentor Help with Transition MHWT: 4 mentors
4. Help with Transition HWT: 4 mentees
5. Mentor Help with Classes MHWC: 2 mentors
6. Help with Classes HWC: 2 mentors; 4 mentees
7. Share Positive Experiences SPE : 2 mentors
8. Excuses for Failure EFF: 4 mentees
9. Fear of Failing FOF: 3 mentees
10. Changes in attitude CIA: 2 mentor; 1 mentee
11. Mentor Good Listener MGL: 6 mentors
12. Good Writing Skills GWS: 2 mentors
13. Good APA Skills GAS: 4 mentors
14. Improve Study Skills ISS: 3 mentors; 1 mentee
15. Never Had Mentor NHM: 3 mentors; 6 mentees
16. Mentor Had Mentor MHM: 4 mentors
17. Mentor Give Back MGB: 2 mentors
18. Mentor Good Technology Skills MGTS: 5 mentors
19. Good Technology Skills GTS: 1 mentee
20. Lacking Technology Skills LTS: 1 mentor; 4 mentees
21. Fear of Online Learning FOL: 1 mentee
22. Weak Writing Skills WWK: 1 mentor; 4 mentees
23. Weak Math Skills WMS: 3 mentees
24. Fear of Change FOC: 2 mentees
25. Mutual Support System MSS: 4 mentors

26. Reinforcement New Behaviors RNB: 1 mentee

27. Recognition and Rewards RAR: 1 mentor; 1 mentee

28. Patience and Understanding PAU: 2 mentors; 4 mentees

The two themes that emerged as most prominent from this initial survey were fear and help. Mentees identified their two most basic reasons for seeking a mentor as fear of failing and fear of change. They asked for help in three skill areas, including writing, math and computer usage. Mentees also wanted help with time management and study skills. Only one mentee had had a mentor before; the rest were familiar with the concept of mentoring and looked forward to this new experience. Mentors identified their key reasons for mentoring as wanting to help by sharing their own positive educational experiences. Only one mentor had been a mentor before; the rest were eager to help new students transition into their college courses and have a successful first quarter at XYZ University.

Focus Group Data Collection

Focus group interviews are used in one to two hour time frames with six to twelve people for qualitative data collection (Kreuger, 1988). Focus groups are designed to promote rich interaction between the study interviewees and lead to a rich understanding for the researcher of what is studied. Glesne and Peshkin (1992) suggest that interviewing more than one person at a time proves very useful; some topics are better discussed by a small group of people who know each other. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) note that focus groups work best when group members are asked very specific questions about a topic after considerable research has already been conducted.

For the purposes of my study, focus groups were conducted at Business Club meetings during each cycle of the research study with those peer mentors involved. At the beginning of each Club meeting, open-ended questions were asked about the work peer mentors were doing with their mentees. All mentors were invited to share information about how they had contacted their mentees and how they were helping them. If mentors were unable to reach or work with their mentees, other mentors present at the Business Club meetings offered practical advice and encouragement, which was then acted upon. All club meetings were recorded by the Business Club secretary in the form of minutes. The Club minutes included data collected about peer mentoring that had taken place since the last Club meeting. Minutes of past meetings were read at the beginning of each new Club meeting, as part of the focus group process.

Quantitative research relies on mathematical analysis and can also be referred to as empirical research (Hinchey, 2008). Quantitative research methods are designed to generalize about social phenomena, making predictions and looking for causes for the phenomena (Glesne, 2006). Both quantitative and qualitative data collectors were employed in my peer mentoring research to improve to overall strength of the study. Such mixed methods research is meant to enhance the validity of the qualitative collectors and to confirm or cross-validate data. Creswell (2003) advocates the inclusion of quantitative data collectors in action research to increase objectivity and allowing for data graphing.

Quantitative research is similar to traditional scientific methods, stating in advance a hypothesis and research questions, and the study findings are presented in statistical language. Adding quantitative data collection in my research study increased

the validity, objectivity, accuracy, and precision of the findings (Hinchey, 2008; Creswell, 2003). At the end of each cycle, mentees in the peer mentoring program were tracked according to the grades they received in each of the classes they took. Charts were created to show the mentees' progress. In addition, the initial group of mentees in the pilot cycle was tracked for four cycles, or the length of the peer mentoring study, to ascertain their academic progress for an entire calendar year and evaluate the effectiveness of the peer mentoring program.

Three Categories of Data Collection

Creswell (2007) notes that the researcher is the primary instrument for data collection in qualitative research. Both nonverbal and verbal communication should be analyzed, with immediate processing of information as it is collected, checking with participants for accuracy and exploring unusual or unanticipated results.

My initial data collection for each cycle of my peer mentoring project included the following forms:

1. Mentor initial application questions.
2. Mentee initial survey questions.
3. Mentor and mentee profile sheet.
4. Mentor and mentee matching form.

My ongoing data collection for each cycle included the following forms of data collectors:

1. Mentoring Progress Report/monthly update.
2. Focus groups with mentors at monthly club meetings.
3. Journal entries by mentors about their mentees.

4. Individual conferences with mentors and mentees as needed about mentoring progress.
5. My own journal entries about each mentoring cycle.

My final data collection for each cycle included the following data collectors:

1. Focus group with mentors at the conclusion of each cycle.
2. In-person interviews with mentors and mentees to evaluate program effectiveness.
3. Analysis of my own and mentors' journal entries at the end of each cycle.
4. Questionnaires given to mentors and mentees at the end of the study to evaluate the effectiveness of the program.

Action research sees data collection, data analysis and the development and verification of relationships and conclusions as being an interrelated and interactive set of processes (Creswell, 2003). The following research questions were developed to allow important themes, patterns and relationships to emerge during my data collection. These questions allowed me to examine the data throughout the cycles of my peer mentoring study and assisted in the documentation of the changes that were being advanced.

Research Questions:

1. In what ways will there be identifiable change in a for-profit learning community after implementation of a peer mentoring program?

a. In what ways will the peer mentoring program affect the mentees' academic performance and continuation rates?

b. In what ways will the peer mentoring program impact the peer mentors' communication and leadership skills?

c. In what ways will the peer mentoring program benefit the campus learning community as a whole?

Analysis of Data

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were employed in this study. There will be some bias in the data collection due to the use of primarily qualitative methods. Qualitative researchers need to be aware of the effect of their own subjectivity and note their attitudes towards the subject being researched (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998).

Triangulation of Data

Data for this peer mentoring study will be triangulated data by using multiple techniques of data gathering. According to Creswell (2003), using the proper validation strategies, including triangulation, clarification of researcher bias, member checking, and rich description will help transcend some of the bias inherent in my mentoring study. Triangulation, or examining different data sources to build justification of themes, will help establish the validity of the study (Corbin, & Straus, 2008). All of the data collectors noted in the **Three Categories of Data Collection** will be employed.

Limitations of Study

I will include the following provisions in my study:

1. The number of peer student mentors remained stable, so they mentored several mentees each quarter and gained experience in mentoring as the cycles continued.
2. The role of the peer mentors depended upon their commitment to the mentoring program and their trustworthiness in dealing with their mentees. Not every meeting or interaction between mentor and mentee could be or was formally monitored.

3. The data from this research was collected at the same time each quarter to avoid the loss of the population participating in the study. As the cycles progressed, several quarters had mentees who did not complete the mentoring program, despite the efforts of their mentors to help.
4. Since the cycles ran continuously, there was only a limited amount of time available for reflection about the mentoring program at the beginning and end of each cycle. Changes that were suggested during focus groups by mentors were sometimes considered valuable but could not be implemented due to time constraints.
5. Peer mentors were not permitted to help their mentees longer than one quarter on a formal basis. At least one mentor, however, remained in contact with a mentee past that end date. Other mentors were informed of their mentees' academic progress during the mentoring program cycles during club meetings and focus groups.

Conclusion

The literature that I examined notes that peer mentors can help students become better acquainted with the university and become more successful students. This is supported by findings from Jekielek, et al. (2002), Mavrinac (2005), Angelique, Kyle, and Taylor (2002), and Chao (1997) who said that mentoring can increase attendance, improve attitudes towards school, reduce some negative behaviors, promote positive social attitudes, and relationships. Chapter Four will examine the individual cycles of my peer mentoring program in depth and analyze the data that was collected.

Chapter Four

Findings

Introduction

This peer mentoring study supports earlier work conducted by Campbell and Campbell (2007), Budge (2006), and Ross-Thomas and Bryant (1994), who found a positive impact of mentoring on student persistence and the G. P. A. of undergraduates at several traditional institutions of higher learning. In addition, this study confirms the research conducted by Ishiyama (2007), who examined the impact of mentoring on first-generation college students. Ishiyama gave students career, research, and academic support during his study on mentoring relationships and found these students benefitted positively from the experience.

By using a mixed methodology approach, I was able to gather sufficient data on my peer mentoring program at the ABC campus of XYZ University to answer my research questions. I created my own data collectors in the form of various surveys and questionnaires to give me the information I needed to confirm my findings.

Question One

1. In what ways will there be identifiable change in a for-profit learning community after implementation of a peer mentoring program?

Data Collection was conducted in a continuous fashion for all five cycles (see Table 1). At the beginning of each cycle, each new mentee was given a set of forms to complete before being admitted to the program. First, they received the Guidelines for Mentee form, a one-page overview of the mentoring program at the ABC campus, including a list of mentee expectations. These guidelines were explained to the mentee in person by C.P.

or me, in order to clarify the mentor-mentee relationship. Next, they completed the Mentee Opening Survey, a set of ten questions centering on the student's reasons for needing a mentor and possible academic issues that could be helped by mentoring. Answers for the opening survey would be immediately reviewed by either C.P. or me, in order to identify the mentee's mentoring needs, which were usually in the areas of math, English or computer skills. After completing the survey, mentees were matched with a mentor according to the availability times indicated on the Mentor/Mentee Profile Sheet they filled out. This sheet contained students' personal contact information and available times and places to meet for mentoring.

The final match between mentor and mentee was completed by myself or C. P., based on which mentors were available to help during a particular cycle. This matching information was put recorded on the Matching Mentor/Mentee Form, a one-page form used to record mentor/mentee matchups. No effort was made to match mentors and mentees on the basis of major, age, or sex. All mentors were expected to work with their assigned mentees, and they were asked to contact them on a regular basis during each cycle and submit information about the progress they were making on the Mentoring Progress Report, a one-page form completed during a mentoring cycle by mentors, detailing their mentoring work with their mentee. Data about mentoring was also collected at Focus Groups held during Business Club meetings in each cycle. Focus Group information was collected by the Business Club secretary in the form of minutes that were maintained as part of the Business Club records.

Table 1

Data Collection Instruments and Key Findings

Data Collection Instrument	When (in which cycles) the Instrument was used	Data discovered
Mentor initial applications questions	All cycles	Desire to give back Desire to help classmates succeed
Mentee initial survey questions	All cycles	Fear of failure as student Fear of math and English Fear of online classes
Mentor and Mentee profile sheets	All cycles	Central data source for mentors and mentees Important needs of mentees
Mentor and Mentee Matching Form	All cycles	Central file Helped reassign mentors Effective matching system
Progress Report/Monthly Update	First two cycles then moved to Focus Groups	Progress and Concerns Shared Data Pool Initial/ongoing Mentee Contact Important
Focus Groups with Mentors at Monthly Club Meetings	All cycles	Shared Mentoring Tips Feedback on Mentees' Progress Important Encouraged each other
Journal Entries by Mentors about mentoring	Cycles 3-5	Value of mentoring Need to Give back Not all can be Mentored
Individual conferences with mentors and mentees	All cycles	Mentors, mentees need constant, consistent support Mentees need to keep current in classwork
My own journal entries	All cycles	Constant struggle to build and support program Saw mentors expand skills Tracked program success

Table 1 (continued)

Final focus groups with mentors	All cycles	Mentors wanted mentees to succeed Shared in mentees' successes Asked to be given more mentees
Analysis of my own and mentors' journal entries at end of certain cycles	All cycles	Sense of accomplishment and pride in program Success from hard work Desire to help others succeed
Interview Questions Mentors Serving Several Cycles	End cycle five	Positive view of program Changes seen on campus offer all students mentors expand program to other campuses
Interview Questions Mentees Served in Program	End cycle five	Changes seen on campus Help from mentors valuable Keep and expand program

Mentor Initial Application

Before joining the mentoring program, all mentors completed an application form composed of ten questions discussing their prior mentoring experiences and their reasons for becoming mentors at the ABC campus. Some mentors were personally interviewed and some completed the applications themselves. The answers obtained from an analysis of a preselected group of seven mentors revealed a strong desire to help beginning students as well as a desire to improve the learning environment at the campus.

Question one asked mentors why they wanted to help. A.T. F.'s responses summarized the other mentors' lengthier replies. She wanted to "give back to the school" and "assist new students with adjusting to a new school experience." D. L. noted that he

"liked to see people finish" and "when…older…people quit, that's it. They don't get the chance back." P. H. added that older college students "are not familiar with computers" and that with the current reliance on computers in the workplace, students "need someone patient to teach them." C. P. felt new students needed to learn to "build a network" and she would "continue learning together with the mentee." T. G. described her reasons for being a mentor as helping mentees have a "smooth transition from one position in their lives into another." N. B. wished he had had a mentor to help him when he returned to school and stressed the "fear of school as an adult" as well as "spouse objections" and "kids wanting time." R. E. wanted to help "improve student relations" and meet other students since he took his classes online and didn't get to meet classmates "face to face."

Question two asked mentors to list specific ways they would help their mentees. The most typical responses were varied and specific and included the following elements: helping with time management, answering questions about coursework and writing papers, sharing experiences, explaining online coursework procedures, providing academic guidance, planning and preparing to be a successful student. D. L. had the most detailed answers for this question. He wanted to be available to answer questions, make his mentees feel at ease, list the order in which to do things, and give them a detailed way to complete assignments and courses. D. L. closed his list of ways to help by saying the most important thing he could teach mentees would be "time management; I'm really good with it; if I can get it [coursework] done, there's no one who can't."

Question three asked mentors if they were good listeners who could be supportive of their mentees and offer constructive advice. All seven mentees whose applications were analyzed in this section said they were good listeners. The female mentors

responded with a simple “yes.” The male mentors had lengthier responses. N. B. said he was a “good listener” who could “understand the need to complain.” R. E. stressed that he had “years of experience,” including “listening as a student.” D. L. had the most detailed response, calling himself an “excellent listener” who can “retain what people tell me.” He was also the most specific about the ways in which he would help his mentees: “Most of what they need advice on, I can help them, very easy. If I’m not positive what the best advice is, I’ll ask a professor or advisor if that’s okay.”

Question four asked if mentors had prior experience with mentors themselves, either on the job or at school. Two mentors, both female, answered no, with T. G. stating her desire to have had one: “I was never fortunate to have a mentor, neither in school or work.” The remaining five mentors had mentors at school or at work or in both situations. R. E. explained that his school mentors “were mostly subject matter experts and when I was dealing with a class or program they helped me understand what I was unable to comprehend on my own.” He also had a mentor at work show him how to use a computer application. A. T. F. had teachers at her previous college that she “could talk to about most things.” C. P. stated simply that she had a mentor “on the job.” N. B. described his mentor as his first section sergeant he had in Germany who “stressed the importance of excellence.” D. L. had three important mentors, including his father, his best friend, and his wife. All were very supportive, with his wife letting him “know the order to do everything in, books, and courses.”

Question five asked mentors if they would have liked a mentor when they began their academic coursework. Six mentors answered yes to this question. One, P. H., said no, she did not want one because she is “more of the type to figure it out myself.” T. G.

wished she had a mentor because it would have made her first weeks as a student easier, and A. T. F. agreed, saying it was "nice to have help learning how things work at a different school." C. P. noted that she had difficulties with her first online classes and did not know how to access the online databases with source material until late in her first quarter. Several mentors, both male, mentioned that they had relatives who served as their initial academic mentors. N. B. thanked his sister for helping him as she went through her last quarter of college. D. L. said his wife, who also attended XYZ University at the ABC campus, was his mentor in life and in the classroom.

Question six asked mentors how they would help their mentees with online learning and if they had computers at home. All seven mentors said yes. A.T. F. said she was an expert at online classes, since she had taken them at a different school. P. H. said that she had a computer and that she would help her mentees "find a syllabus" or log on to their classes. C. P. also had a computer and offered to "explain step by step…how to navigate on icampus [the XYZ website] and Ecompanion [the online learning platform used by XYZ in 2009]. N. B. and R. E., both experienced online students, described the practical advice they would give mentees. N. B. said he would "help them get online, set up folders, all semesters in folders, keep papers, organize." R. E. wanted to help his mentees by "getting [them] familiarized with online learning…changing habits…not being around negative people." T. G. felt she could assist her mentees by "giving clear and precise instructions, as well as having a great deal of patience." D. L. stressed his time management skills, offering to show his mentees "how to organize…how to prioritize, what to get done first, instead of spending too much time on something that doesn't need to get done."

Question seven asked mentors if they were familiar with APA style formatting and could help mentees with writing papers. All seven responded positively to this question, stating that they had experience in APA formatting and had written papers for their previous classes.

Question eight asked what problems mentors had faced when they first began taking classes in college. A. T. F. stated “time management issues” and T. G. agreed with her. P. H. said she did not understand how to pick classes for upcoming quarters. Several other mentors referred to specific issues with writing papers, especially C. P. who did not know about how to structure her papers or find college level resources when she took her first classes. N. B. said he needed to learn how to find the course syllabus, “look at it, read it, keep it, to keep on track.” He also needed help “understanding the requirements,” and “navigating i-campus [his online class shell] and logging in.” R. E., who said that he had been out of school for a while, learned that he had to pick a place to do schoolwork and set up a schedule “by coming to the campus, the LRC.” D. L. did not know how to order his books before classes started, and he also did not have a computer with that he could use for classwork. In addition, he had problems as a beginning student because he “did not ask enough questions, needed to ask more to know [professors’] expectations.”

Question nine asked mentors to agree with the framework of the mentoring program and to meet with their mentees at least once a week. All seven mentors agreed that they could work within the mentoring framework. Several answered briefly; others gave more detailed replies. D. L. said he could easily meet with his mentees at any time, since he worked close to the ABC campus. C. P. agreed to weekly meetings and also volunteered to help her mentees “over the phone or email,” and N. B. agreed, stating he

could “meet online or in person” with his mentees. T. G. said she could meet with any mentees “at least once a week, if not more.” R. E. noted that he needed “to mentor online student[s] at best” and was “only available [in person] on Fridays or Saturdays.”

Question ten asked mentors if they had any questions or comments about the program before they began their mentoring experience at the ABC campus. R. E. concluded by giving a summary of his own college experiences so far and what techniques he had developed to ensure his academic success. He stressed the value of time management as a skill new students needed most. T. G., who was graduating and “about to cross the threshold into the master program,” asked if she could be both mentor and mentee at the same time. N. B. was highly positive, saying that he thought the program was a “great idea, helpful.” C. P. agreed, saying she thought it would be a great program “which will empower both the mentor and mentee with the knowledge gained from their experiences.” D. L. asked how mentors would be given feedback and asked that mentees not call him at night because he is “a morning person.” P. H. and A. T. F. had no comments or questions about the program itself.

Mentee Initial Survey

At the beginning of Cycle One, seven mentees completed a survey questionnaire with ten questions asking them about their need for a mentor and the help they would like to receive. The first question asked why they wanted a mentor. Each mentee responded with a simple statement. C. D. stated that he “needed help getting started,” while M. W. and R. G. requested help with “time management.” G.W. felt she needed a mentor because she was taking her first online class. E. L. was concerned with the classes he had to take in English and math and felt a mentor would be a real benefit to him.

The second question asked mentees to explain the type of help they would need in specific subject areas. C. R. did not list a specific subject but requested help with "writing," since she knew that she would be required to write papers in every class. Five out of seven mentees requested specific assistance with English and math. M. W. listed computers and grammar as areas of weakness but did not specifically mention math as an area of concern.

The third question focused on mentees' study and computer skills and asked whether they owned a computer. Five out of seven mentees stated that they owned a computer and that their computer skills were "good" or "moderate." E. L. and M.W. both noted that they had no computers; E. L. said his computer skills were "terrible," while M.W. said his skills were "okay." When answering this question, all seven mentees referred specifically to their computer skills rather than study skills.

The fourth question asked about mentees' greatest needs as students. Math was an issue for M. W., who said he had taken no math courses in high school. C. D. stated he needed help getting adjusted to courses in the United States, after taking classes in his native country. G. W. said she was a good reader but needed to further develop her college writing skills. R. G. felt she most needed a mentor's advice: "When I get frustrated I need someone to get me back on track and talk to [me]." Time management was C. R.'s greatest need.

Questions five and six asked about previous mentoring experiences and for ways mentors could provide help. Most respondents said they had not had any mentors in the past. Several mentioned their mothers had been their mentors. C. D. explained that mentoring programs did not exist in his previous college. Mentees said their mentors

could provide help by making phone calls, keeping in touch, making them [the mentees] comfortable, helping them stay focused, and showing them "how to work the system."

Questions seven and eight focused on similar academic issues. Question seven asked about the mentees' greatest fears as new students. "Failure" was the simple response from E. L. and C. R. agreed with him, citing "failing" as her concern. G.W. listed her lack of "time management" as her major fear. Several other mentees specifically mentioned math as their greatest fear. R. G. was worried about "getting too frustrated." Question eight asked what had caused mentees to succeed or fail in the past as students. E. L, who had earlier listed failure as his greatest fear, left this question blank. C. D., looking forward to having a mentor, felt "lack of advice" had caused him to fail. G. W. felt she had not taken time in the past to complete class assignments, had fallen behind, and then could not get caught up. C. R. noted that her life was very busy, and she had failed when she was "trying to fit everything into a 24-hour period." R. G. agreed, stating that she "failed because she was overwhelmed" with work and schoolwork. G. W. had the longest response, noting one day while he was in high school, he was "bored with school, noticed the same assignments as last year and stopped doing the work." When G. W. got a bad report card, he "made his Mom cry" and then he cried, and worked until he made the honor roll.

The last two questions referenced the program itself. Question nine asked if mentees would agree to the framework of the mentoring program and meet with their mentors at least once a week. All agreed, stating "yes," or in C. R.'s words, "I will try." Question ten asked for overall questions or comments regarding the program. M. W. stated "the program sounds good." G. W. was most specific, saying she wanted the

program to “get me to a happy place,” where she could learn to be a successful student. R.G. said, “No,” and others left the question blank.

Question Two

1. a. In what ways will the peer mentoring program affect the mentees’ academic performance and continuation rates?

The following five tables contain the data gathered in the five cycles of the peer mentoring program at the ABC campus of XYZ University. Each table represents a single cycle of mentee academic information, including the mentor each mentee worked with, the number of credits earned by the mentees and the mentees’ GPA.

In the first cycle (see Table 2), there were five male and five female mentees. Mentee 1-1 was in his second quarter of classes and did not fit the original parameters of the mentoring program. He worked with a mentor (A. T. F.) throughout the cycle but did not complete his classes. Mentee 1-1 was the only student, male or female, who did not earn any credits or pass any classes in Cycle One. Of the additional male mentees, two had A/B averages (1-2; 1-10), and two had C’s (1-4; 1-5). For the five female mentees, two had A/B averages (1-3; 1-6), one had a B (1-7), and two had D averages (1-8; 1-9). There were five mentors who worked in Cycle One; four had mentees who earned A/B’s. One mentor, P. H., who was graduating and worked only one cycle, had one mentee, who received a low GPA (1.167) for the quarter. C. P., who worked with three mentees with passing averages, also had one mentee with a low GPA, 1.5. This was the only cycle where one mentor worked with four mentees, due to the small mentor pool in the initial stages of the mentoring program and the willingness of C. P. to work with a larger number of students.

Table 2

Academic Record Chart by Cycle

Cycle 1

Student Mentee	Mentor	Credits Attempted	Credits Earned	GPA
1-1 M	ATF	18	0	0
1-2 M	ATF	40.5	40.5	3.556
1-3 F	DL	40.5	40.5	4.0
1-4 M	DL	27	27	2.6
1-5 M	CP	36	27	2.0
1-6 F	CP	45	45	3.7
1-7 F	CP	36	36	3.0
1-8 F	CP	9	4.5	1.5
1-9 F	PH	27	18	1.167
1-10 M	TG	36	36	3.5

There were eight mentees in the second cycle (see Table 3), three males and five females. Of the three males, one had a B average (2-8), one a D (2-3) and one withdrew, receiving no credits (2-5). Of the females, one had an A average (2-4), one a C average (2-1), and one had an F average (2-6). Two female mentees received no credits (2-3; 2-7), indicating they withdrew from classes completely during the second cycle. There were five mentors in this cycle, four who continued from Cycle One and one new mentor, C. J. Two of the original mentors, A. T. F. and D. L., had mentees who withdrew or failed for the quarter. Both mentors discussed their mentoring approaches at Business Club Focus Groups throughout the cycle. A. T. F. and D. L. reached out multiple times to their mentees, and they also received guidance and encouragement from their fellow mentors, enabling them to move into Cycle Three prepared to work with a new group of mentees.

Table 3

Cycle 2

Student Mentee	Mentor	Credits Attempted	Credits Earned	GPA
2-1 F	TG	4.5	4.5	2.0
2-2 F	ATF	4.5	0	0
2-3 M	DL	18	9	1.5
2-4 F	CP	13.5	13.5	4.0
2-5 M	DL	0	0	0
2-6 F	TG	18	4.5	0.25
2-7 F	ATF	4.5	0	0
2-8 M	CJ	27	27	3.0

There were eleven mentees in the third cycle (see Table 4), the most of any cycle. There were three female and eight male mentees, which resulted in the largest number of male mentees in any cycle. Of the eight male mentees, two had A averages (3-5; 3-11) but one of those two (3-11) earned no credits earned since he took two remedial courses. One male mentee had a B average (3-7), two had C's (3-6; 3-8), and three earned no credits and no grades, since they withdrew completely from classes. Of the three female mentees, one had an A average (3-9), one had a C average (3-1) but received no credits by taking 090 or remedial classes, and one had a D average (3-2). There were nine mentors in Cycle Three, the most of any cycle. Only two of the original mentors from Cycle One served. Six mentors served for the first time, and each worked with one mentor. Of those six new mentors, one had a mentee withdraw completely (3-10), and the other five mentors had mentees with A, B and C averages (3-6; 3-7; 3-8; 3-9; 3-11).

Table 4

Cycle 3

Student Mentee	Mentor	Credits Attempted	Credits Earned	GPA
3-1 F	DL	9	0 (090 classes)	2.0
3-2 F	DL	18	18	1.75
3-3 M	CJ	0	0	0
3-4 M	TG	0	0	0
3-5 M	TG	27	27	3.667
3-6 M	BD	31.5	22.5	2.143
3-7 M	SS	18	18	3.0
3-8 M	AT	13.5	13.5	2.333
3-9 F	NB	18	18	4.0
3-10 M	PP	0	0	0
3-11 M	AP	9	0 (090 classes)	4.0

There were seven mentees in this fourth cycle (see Table 5), three males and four females. Of the male mentees, two had C averages (4-4; 4-6) and one withdrew completely (4-1), earning no credits. Of the female mentees, one earned an A average (4-3), one a C average (4-7), and one an F (4-5). One female mentee, who withdrew completely (4-2), did not fit the requirements of the mentoring program because she was a returning student, not new. There were five mentors who worked in Cycle Four, three from the original group (C. J, A. T. F, and D. L.), and two newer mentors (S. S. and B. D.).

Table 5

Cycle 4

Student Mentee	Mentor	Credits Attempted	Credits Earned	GPA
4-1 M	CJ	0	0	0
4-2 F	ATF	43.5	0	0
4-3 F	ATF	18	18	4.0
4-4 M	AT	18	18	2.75
4-5 F	SS	9	4.5	0.5
4-6 M	DL	9	9	2.5
4-7 F	BD	9	0 (090 classes)	2.5

There were nine mentees in the fifth cycle (see Table 6), three males and six females. Of the three males, one had an A/B average (5-5) and two had a B average (5-3; 5-8). Of the six female mentees, two had A/B averages (5-6; 5-9), three had B averages (5-1; 5-2; 5-7), and one had a C (5-4). There were no mentees who received failing grades or withdrew completely from classes in Cycle Five. There were five mentors, including three from the original group. Each mentor had at least one mentee who earned an A or B average for the cycle, which was the highest average of any cycle, matching mentors with mentee averages. Mentor A. T. F. had two mentees in this cycle with the highest grade point averages of all nine mentees.

Table 6

Cycle 5

Student Mentee	Mentor	Credits Attempted	Credits Earned	GPA
5-1 F	DL	9	9	3.0
5-2 F	DL	4.5	4.5	3.0
5-3 M	CP	4.5	4.5	3.0
5-4 F	CJ	4.5	4.5	2.0
5-5 M	CJ	9	9	3.5
5-6 F	ATF	9	9	4.0
5-7 F	ATF	4.5	4.5	3.0
5-8 M	BD	4.5	4.5	3.0
5-9 F	BD	0	0	0

Interview Questions for Mentees Serving in Program for Several Quarters

At the conclusion of Cycle Five, a selected group of mentees was given a set of five questions to answer about their participation in the mentoring program. Eight of the group of forty-five mentees responded. Overall, these mentees indicated that they were

highly satisfied with the program and felt that it should continue to run at the ABC campus.

Question one asked mentees how the program had changed them and how they felt they had benefitted from the mentoring program. Several mentees stated their organization skills were better and that they had become better writers. C. D. noted that he "did not have much college experience before, so having a mentor made it easier." C. R. believed her mentor "helped me get through the quarter." Several mentees wanted to spend more time with their mentors and said that "scheduling meetings was difficult." One mentee, C. S., was highly positive about her mentor, A. T. F., describing the type of help she received with time management, and saying they "kept in touch constantly, once or twice a week" at least. Another mentee, E. B., also praised her mentor, C. P., who helped her have "more personal confidence in my own capabilities," and gave her "a great lesson about dedication."

Question two asked mentees to describe in detail how they had changed by working with their mentors. C. S. had the most detailed response, noting that she had been helped with organization and study skills, received emotional support, and had been given important information about the courses she was taking. S. P. had a more neutral response, claiming that she had not received much help from her mentor and "would have liked to know [more] about online classes." A. J. found that his writing skills had been developed and stated that he had "discussed assignments, teachers, and approaches to subject matter" with his mentor, C. P. Several other mentees reported that their writing and research skills had improved overall. C. D. noted that his mentor showed him how to

"make a balance between work, study, and life," and he found A. T. F's advice "very inspiring."

Question three asked mentees to describe how the ABC campus environment had changed since they joined the mentoring program. S. P. responded with an analogy, stating that she thought "this school is more like a family," and that she "appreciated everyone's concerns with one another." A. J. noted that he received more help with his coursework at the ABC campus than other XYZ locations. C. D. reported that he saw a "better social life on campus," and that he felt it was "good to know that there is a student like myself using his or her experience to assist others." E. B. agreed with his assessment, saying that she felt the mentoring program "contributed to an increased feeling of unity and a greater sense of belonging." C. S. found the campus more "pleasant" and "user friendly," noting that help was available was always available. J. B. liked the clubs and activities held at the campus each quarter.

Question four asked mentees what they liked most about the program and what was enjoyable about having a mentor. All the mentees appreciated the help they received with their classwork and the skills they developed, including their time management abilities. S. P. found the program "beneficial" and stressed that "not many schools have this option." C. P. liked the fact that her mentor gave her "guidance, support," and was "not pushy." C. D. liked the availability of his mentor and her valuable advice.

Question five asked mentees to recommend changes in the program overall. Several mentees, including J. B., stressed the need for mentors and mentees to keep in touch. S. P. felt that mentors should "try to communicate with their mentees more." C. D. and A. J. said that the program was working well and should continue. C. R. suggested

finding more ways for mentors and mentees to meet, including having "a social so everyone can meet at least once."

Question Three

1. b. In what ways will the peer mentoring program impact the peer mentors' communication and leadership skills?

Interview Questions for Mentors Serving in Program for Several Quarters

A group of six mentors were given five interview questions to collect data after cycle five. Three of the six interviewed mentors were founding members of the Business Club and worked in the mentoring program nearly every cycle. Responses for the five interview questions were reviewed and analyzed for commonalities and differences. This was the most effective way to collect data to evaluate the effectiveness of the peer mentoring program from the mentors' perspective. In addition, this data collector allowed me to measure the impact of the program on the mentors themselves and to gauge how they saw themselves as being changed by the mentoring process.

Question one asked how being part of the program had changed them and how they had personally benefited. Several mentors noted their appreciation for the successes experienced by their mentees. C. P. had a "great feeling of joy to know that I helped someone…write a better paper, find some new sources, acquire some research techniques which before were unknown." The importance of giving back to mentees was stressed, with R. E. commenting that he had a chance to "give something back to a close-knit XYZ University community of students working together and helping each other." Mentors, especially D. L., felt that participation in the program increased their sense of self-

confidence and self-worth, as they guided mentees through their first quarters. T. G. stressed that she "benefited …every time I came in contact with my mentees."

Question two asked mentors to detail some of the ways they had changed and to give examples of several mentees they had helped. Mentors described several types of changes, including the enhancement of their listening skills as a result of working with their mentees. A.T. F. noted, "Listening is a key skill," when mentoring. C. P. agreed, saying, "I listened to their concerns, and shared my own experiences in overcoming that specific academic hurdle." Several mentors focused on their success in helping online mentees. R. E. noted that he had helped five students successfully complete their first online courses and that they had all come back to thank him personally. A. T. F., who was already highly organized before becoming a mentor, found those skills further developed along with her people and leadership skills. T. G. shared many details about her first mentee, who was "very afraid of this new adventure" and had "never used a computer before." After spending "plenty of nights in the computer lab" with this mentee, T. G. found her mentee "was now typing faster than I was," and he completed his first quarter with a very high G.P.A.

Question three asked mentors how the ABC campus environment had changed since the beginning of the mentoring program. All mentor responses to this question were positive. The campus was described as being "more friendly and caring," with more students helping each other, "daily, even in simple tasks," according to C. J. Mentors noted a high degree of cooperation among XYZ students in the classrooms and in the open labs. C. P. explained that mentors were helping "not only mentees but other students as well," and found that "mentees [in turn] started to help [other] new students." R. E.

suggested mentors be put in charge of the ABC Learning Center and computer lab on weekends in the absence of full-time faculty or LRC staff. During the weekend, R. E. felt mentors would provide a valuable service and be able to help even more new and continuing students than during weekday class times. As an online student himself, R. E. spent many weekends working on the classes he was taking each quarter and helping other students who needed assistance at the same time.

Question four asked mentors what they liked most about being in the peer mentoring program. T. G. saw the program as a chance to give back and help a new student in the way she wanted help during her own first quarter in college. Other mentors, especially R. E., found themselves in a partnership with their mentees, sharing their struggles and helping them through their difficulties and fears. C. P. felt she was "part of an extended network of colleagues and student, sharing experiences and supporting each other." A. T. F. remembered being a first quarter student and having her own "questions and anxieties." T. G. rejoiced in her mentees' successes: "If they passed an exam, you would have thought it was Christmas." Another mentor saw mentoring as a learning process for himself and found his coursework was easier when he shared information with his mentees. For D. L., mentoring was an "ego boost," especially since more than half of his mentees successfully passed their first quarter classes.

Question five, the final question, asked mentors about changes to the mentoring program. All felt it should be continued in its current form. They also suggested expanding it to other campuses and making mentors available to any student who needed or requested one, not just new students. A. T .F. suggested contacting mentees before the beginning of classes, rather than waiting for classes to begin. C. J. agreed, emphasizing

the need to meet with mentees in a type of mixer or student event that would allow everyone in the program to ask questions at the beginning of the quarter.

Reflections in Mentors' Journals

One mentor, A.T. F., kept a journal which described the weekly progress she made with her mentees over several cycles. All the original mentors were given journals; only A.T. F. followed through and used this data collector. Other mentors indicated that they were too busy with work and school assignments to write in a journal; they preferred to share information about their mentees during the Business Club focus groups and at in-person meetings with me. A.T. F. used the emails she exchanged with mentees and other information she had collected to analyze the interactions she had with each mentee. Some journal entries were lengthy. Some just noted an inability to reach a mentee and the subsequent frustration she felt at the lack of contact. In the closing mentor survey A.T. F. noted that using a journal like this was an effective way to track her work with her mentors.

A.T. F. showed both dedication and purpose in her journal. During the first two cycles she had difficulties reaching her mentees, and when they did not earn passing grades at the end of those cycles, she was discouraged. During the next two cycles, she was quite successful in both reaching and helping those mentees, who subsequently received high marks at the end of their first quarter and several quarters following. A.T. F.'s journal entries added another dimension to the mentoring process, because they allowed her to reflect on the obstacles that the mentors faced during each cycle. After analyzing the responses from mentees in their end of program questionnaire, I found that

A.T. F. received the highest praise and most positive comments from her mentees when compared to mentee comments about several other mentors.

Focus Group Data Collection

For Cycles One through Five, focus groups were very important to the mentoring program. During these cycles, the focus groups consisted of four mentors who were actively involved in setting up the Business Club and its monthly activities. Mentors met for one hour once a month, or three times a cycle, to discuss the progress they were making with their mentees. Mentors shared ideas about how to reach mentees and help them become successful in their classes. Journal articles on peer mentoring were read out loud and discussed. At the beginning of Cycles Two through Five, mentors were given information about the grades their mentees had received from the previous cycles. Mentors took great pride in seeing their mentees become successful college students.

Each mentor felt a significant gain in self-confidence by the end of Cycle Five, regardless of the length of time or number of cycles that they served as mentors. All of the mentors in the program saw their work with their mentees as a positive experience, a chance to give back and help someone through the first quarter's classes. Whether they mentored for one cycle or all five, the mentors recommended continuing the program at ABC campus and expanding it to other XYZ campuses as well.

Mentors felt most rewarded when they made a personal connection with their mentees. They felt most frustrated when they were assigned a mentee who would not or could not meet them on campus or who would not answer phone calls or set up meeting times. Each mentor learned to persevere when they could not immediately contact a mentee. Mentors also learned to accept the fact that they would not be able to help

mentees who would not meet with them or do their own coursework in a timely fashion. This was an important lesson for mentors to learn, that they would not be able to help all of their mentees become successful students.

Mentors found that through helping others they could advance their own writing and study skills, and they gained self-confidence in the process. They became more open in seeking help from each other about problems with mentoring and exchanged ideas about best mentoring practices. Mentors volunteered to advertise the mentoring program at the New Student Orientations at the beginning of each quarter, which developed their public speaking skills and made them more confident about their abilities to help their new classmates. Mentors who worked during multiple cycles of the program and who participated in the Business Club activities became the student leaders at the ABC campus. They decided which monthly activities to run each quarter, and they actively promoted those activities and made them successful. They helped collect donations for the campus food drive. They invested considerable time and effort into making their campus a great place to study, learn, and meet new people.

Mentors enhanced their communication skills on an individual basis. Some were already skilled communicators when they began mentoring; others needed to develop the ability to get their ideas across using different techniques. All mentors stated they were better able to listen to their mentees' concerns and communicate more effectively by the end of Cycle Five.

Mentors were highly supportive of each other, their mentees, and the program itself. They encouraged each other during club meetings, focus groups, club activities, and informal gatherings. When mentors felt they were not being as successful with a

mentee as they could be, they immediately asked me or another mentor for advice. Being supportive and offering support was one of the greatest achievements of the mentoring program during all five cycles.

Mentors' confidence about their mentoring abilities grew each time they worked with a new mentee. Initially several mentors were hesitant about their abilities to help a new student become successful, and they would be concerned if they saw their mentees had received poor grades for the previous academic quarter. When I explained that those mentees were still enrolled in classes and had taken remedial courses for which they received no credits towards their grade point averages, these mentors became more assured about their mentoring abilities and continued to work in the program.

Each mentor who worked in the program had at least one mentee who was either difficult to reach or who did not achieve a passing grade point average at the end of a cycle. These difficulties added to mentors' determination to make their next group of mentees more successful. Mentors had individual academic strengths which they passed on to their mentees by meeting with them in person, on the phone, or online. The skills most requested by mentees, in the areas of researching and writing college-level papers, with APA citations, were provided by all the mentors in the program. In addition, mentors were able to help their mentees access the online components of their classroom courses and were able to guide them through the XYZ databases in a competent fashion.

All mentors displayed a high degree of empathy when working with their mentees. Both groups, mentors and mentees, were adult students with full-time jobs and family obligations which left them limited time to study for college-level courses. Mentors were always ready to listen to their mentees' concerns and tell them that they,

too, had gone through the strain of trying to do school work with little sleep and no time to read texts or prepare for quizzes. The mentors developed their own mantra, “If we did it, you can do it, too,” and they were unfailing in their genuine concern for their mentees’ problems.

Each cycle mentors returned to ask for new mentees. They did not lose their enthusiasm for mentoring and worked hard to make the program a success. Mentors did not complain about the work involved with helping another student in addition to their own classwork or their own workplace issues. While it is difficult to maintain a high level of enthusiasm for any educational program, the peer mentors always looked forward to the end of the quarter, when they could find out how their mentees succeeded with their coursework, and the beginning of the next quarter, when they would have a chance to work with new mentees. It was gratifying for me to see how much the mentors enjoyed helping each other and their new classmates.

Question Four

1. c. In what ways will the peer mentoring program benefit the campus learning community as a whole?

Club Activities

Different activities at the ABC campus were sponsored each quarter by the Business Club. Some activities varied according to the time of the calendar year in which they took place. Other activities occurred every cycle, including Game Night and the Food Drive. For Game Night, Business Club members brought in games they wanted to play and share with the entire campus community for an hour as part of a designated Club meeting night. Refreshments were provided by Club members free of charge. Any XYZ

student taking a class at ABC campus on Game Nights was given the chance to meet informally with fellow classmates and exchange ideas. ABC staff was also invited to Game Night, including the campus dean, LRC manager, and academic assistant. Other activities sponsored by the club included guest speakers, pizza and a movie night, and fall activities such as “Giving Thanks to Campus Staff and Faculty”, a night where students wrote out brief messages of thanks to their professors and other campus staff who helped them during the course of the calendar years. Refreshments were served in the student meeting room, including pie and other desserts. Student response to club activities and events was highly positive. Total attendance varied from activity to activity. Activities held in the fall and summer were the most popular events and were the best attended. Flyers advertising the Club activities were posted on classroom doors and on the bulletin boards in several ABC hallways.

Campus Involvement in Food Drive

Flyers were created by C. P. to solicit food for a local food bank. The Business Club met during Cycle One to determine what community outreach project they wanted to support. The Catholic Social Services food bank was found to be the best option, since XYZ University does not allow clubs to collect money or have a bank account. Shopping bags were placed in classrooms and other areas of the campus to provide a means of transporting the food contributions to the drop off area in Norristown. A Business Club member who joined the club in Cycle Two prepared two poster boards which are permanently displayed in several campus hallways to remind students to bring in their donations when they came to their classes in the evenings. At the end of each cycle, all

food bags are transported by car to the food bank. Letters of thanks from the food bank director are displayed on the campus bulletin boards from quarter to quarter.

Conclusion

Chapter Four analyzed the findings in data collected during all five cycles of the mentoring program. Chapter Five will present conclusions about the program's success and offer recommendations on how to keep the mentoring program as well as expand it to other campuses.

Chapter Five

Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

This dissertation examines a peer mentoring program at a for-profit university that was conducted for five academic quarters or five cycles of mentoring. The program was run sequentially, quarter to quarter, and included groups of mentors and mentees, male and female, all students at the ABC campus of XYZ University. The total number of mentors and mentees varied, with new mentees each cycle. Some mentors participated during the entire program, but most worked one to three cycles. Male and female mentors and mentees were randomly matched according to their academic needs. There were more female mentors than male, which reflects the student body composition at the ABC campus and XYZ University as a whole. Information on the program was kept in binders in the ABC Learning Center and was posted on bulletin boards throughout the campus.

This program was promoted actively, and information was distributed at XYZ campuses in the same geographical region as the ABC campus. Several other XYZ campuses created their own mentoring programs, similar to the one at ABC but were not able to achieve the same type of results in terms of student success. The term “success” is defined in this study as a mentee’s completing his or her first quarter classes at XYZ University with at least a 2.0 G.P.A.

Throughout the mentoring program, my work was centered more on the ABC mentors than the mentees. Mentors were given strict guidelines about the type of guidance and interactions they were to maintain with their mentees and were expected to adhere to those guidelines. The Business Club was founded by the first group of peer

mentor volunteers who set up the guidelines for the Club, chose its vision and mission statement, its Club activities, its Food Drive, and then served as Club officers for multiple quarters. Club meetings were used as focus groups; part of each Club meeting included discussions on mentors' progress with their mentees. Mentors shared information about how they contacted their mentees, how they met and worked with them on a one-on-one basis. Some Club meetings were open to the entire campus during each quarter. The most successful open meetings included Game Night, when ABC students met for an hour and played different types of board games, and Pizza and a Movie Night. Other seasonally themed meetings were held around the times of various holidays throughout the school year, including Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Research Questions

1. In what ways will there be identifiable change in a for-profit learning community after implementation of a peer mentoring program?

    a. In what ways will the peer mentoring program affect the mentees' academic performance and continuation rates?

    b. In what ways will the peer mentoring program impact the peer mentors' communication and leadership skills?

    c. In what ways will the peer mentoring program benefit the campus learning community as a whole?

Conclusions

This program was possible because of support from the ABC campus dean who was serving as the campus academic administrator at the beginning of Cycle One. I had the assistance and release time that I needed to work on all aspects of the mentoring program,

including creating the original mentoring documents, finding and training the mentors, advertising the program to prospective mentees, collecting program data, running the Business Club, sponsoring multiple Club activities, and additional mentoring activities.

This program positively affected the new student retention rate at the ABC campus during the five quarters of implementation and beyond. All new students who connected with their mentors and followed the program guidelines of weekly meetings made it successfully to the end of their first quarter of attending classes at ABC. Beyond retention, this peer mentoring program created a sense of inclusion for all ABC students. This program directly impacted the campus culture at the ABC campus. The peer mentoring program prepared both mentors and mentees for the role of mentoring in the workplace. Peer mentors acquired transferable skills during the mentoring process that will enable them to advance in their current and future workplaces. Peer mentors also advanced their sense of self-esteem and self-worth. This sense was reflected in the end of program survey conducted both in person and as a questionnaire. As a result of their mentoring efforts, peer mentors either maintained their current high grade point averages or advanced those averages.

Mentoring and Clubs at Other XYZ Campuses

Several other XYZ campuses also developed their own mentoring programs and founded their own Business Clubs. These campuses achieved only limited success with their mentoring programs but were able to run Business Clubs that met the needs of their own campuses and students. Due to the success of the ABC mentoring program, there are still opportunities to establish the ABC mentoring program at these campuses and then expand peer mentoring in other XYZ University academic regions.

Difficulties and Suggestions for Improvement

The major difficulties faced when running the mentoring program involved academic support and time. The original ABC campus dean and director were highly supportive of the mentoring program. They gave me time to create the mentoring documents, recruit and train the mentors, and then recruit the new students into the program for each cycle. After Cycle Three, when this dean and director left, the new dean and director were not as supportive, and I was given additional assignments to perform which left me with less time to run the mentoring program. In addition, the New Student Orientations at XYZ University switched from a live version in a campus classroom to an entirely online format. This made recruiting new students for mentees very difficult. Also, the new dean at the ABC campus decided to restrict access to mentors to only those new students who were enrolled in remedial math and English programs.

Other difficulties included not having enough time to meet with mentors outside of Business Club meetings, especially during the beginning of each cycle of the program. Additional time would have been valuable at the end of each cycle to meet with mentors and help them reflect on what they had learned about mentoring and how they had been changed by the process of mentoring. Having an event at the beginning of each Cycle to introduce the mentors and mentees and give them a chance to bond would have been valuable as well, but there was no time to plan or execute an event like this during the first week of an academic quarter.

Value of Program

In my study, the mentees indicated that their peer mentors helped them become acquainted with the university, were supportive, gave positive feedback, were good role

models, were easy to communicate with, and did not use peer pressure to get them to do anything negative. In addition, when the program concluded at the end of Cycle Five, mentors remained active in campus activities, including the Business Club and the campus Food Drive. Lacking their own assigned mentees, the peer mentors worked on their own, helping any students or classmates they found in need, whether in a classroom setting or in the open computer labs. Mentors offered advice about time management, studying for tests and quizzes, writing papers, doing research, and answering online discussion posts. Students from other XYZ campuses who came to take classes at ABC campus were impressed by the amount of help they received and by the friendliness of the campus as a whole. Students from ABC who left to take classes at other XYZ campuses would complain that those campuses did not offer them the kind of help they had come to expect at ABC.

At the formal end of the mentoring program, one mentor continued to help students each weekend while he was working on his own online classes in the ABC open computer lab. He would ask how these students were doing in their online classes and then offer them advice on time management and show them how to format their papers and post online replies. The effects of the mentoring program lasted long after Cycle Five, when the official matching of mentors and mentees concluded. These effects were valuable and unanticipated, making the concept of students giving back to the ABC campus a reality.

Recommendations

I would make the following recommendations for continuing and expanding the mentoring program. First, XYZ peer mentoring programs should to be run by a skilled

faculty administrator who is given adequate student support and compensation time to work with mentors and mentees. The faculty administrator should be familiar with adult learning theories and skilled in mentoring adult students. Second, a peer mentoring program should be expanded to other campuses throughout the different regions of XYZ University. Overall, peer mentors should be offered to all new XYZ students taking remedial math and English courses.

There are several additional recommendations. Peer mentoring should be available to all students who need a mentor, whether they are beginning their first quarter of classes or having any type of academic difficulty due to work or family issues. Peer mentoring should be available both online and at the campus level. This would require recruiting and training peer mentors who are skilled in taking online classes and are willing to share that expertise with online students who are struggling to succeed in their own classes. Students, who are having academic difficulties at the end of week five, or midterm grading time, should be offered peer mentors to help guide them through the rest of the academic quarter. These mentors would be trained to help their mentees with time management skills necessary to deal with online coursework deadlines.

As a reward for their hard work, peer mentors and mentees should be formally recognized at an annual campus event. In addition, information about the mentors, mentees, and the mentoring program should be posted on campus bulletin boards, ideally in the campus Learning Center, to illustrate the success of the mentoring program and promote its continued success. When the mentoring programs expand to other XYZ campuses, peer mentoring data should be collected to measure the effectiveness and long-term value of the program. Mentoring information and success stories should be shared

from campus to campus in different XYZ regions during monthly campus deans and faculty meetings. Faculty who are sponsoring peer mentoring programs should be recognized for their dedication to student success during annual XYZ events.

Conclusion

This type of peer mentoring program has not been studied at any other for-profit university. Its value lies in the rewards that it creates for both the mentors and mentees, in terms of various academic and social achievements. The program was successful in each of its five cycles. Mentees achieved academic success and passed their courses through the help of their mentors, regardless of the type of courses they were taking and the subject matter they were studying. Gender, race and the delivery systems of the course material, whether online or in a brick and mortar classroom, were also not factors in mentees' achieving academic success. Looking over the data gathered during this program, mentees are shown to have benefitted academically from their work with their individual mentors, who motivated them and gave them the tools for success as college students at the ABC campus of XYZ University. Mentors also benefited from their participation in this program by expanding their leadership and communication skills.

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Appendix A: Guidelines for Mentors and Mentees

GUIDELINES FOR MENTORS

Thanks for volunteering to be a mentor for students at King of Prussia campus. The mentor's main task is to provide guidance and support to our new (1st quarter) students outside the classroom that would help them address various academic issues they will face, especially in weeks 1-5.

Please find below the list of guidelines which the Academic Office recommends to be followed during the mentoring process:

- Commit to serving as a mentor for maximum 5-8 hours per month (approximately 1 hour/week) based on the needs of the mentee.
- Assist the mentee with getting into their online classes in weeks 1-2, eCompanion, especially looking at the syllabus, assignments due and gradebook.
- If necessary, encourage the mentee to schedule a tutoring session with a designated Tutoring Professor, and educate him/her about the benefits of tutoring services.
- Maintain scheduled mentoring hours and establish the way to keep in touch with the mentee: via phone, email or in person.
- Give feedback regarding the mentoring progress once per week during the first 5 weeks of the quarter to one of the following persons: Dr. J F, Campus Dean at ABC, Professor D M, Associate Campus Dean, T M, Academic Assistant at ABC and C. P. PT Academic Assistant.

- Help the mentee to set goals and work toward accomplishing them.
- Serve as a positive role model and friend.
- Discuss training, internship and educational opportunities.
- **Don't do the mentee's homework for him/her, but rather provide support in their study process.**

Thank you for choosing to become a mentor!
We really appreciate your help!!

GUIDELINES FOR MENTEES

Thanks for making XYZ the choice of your University. As we want you to have the most positive and rewarding experience, please be advised that you have an opportunity to seek a peer mentor, whose main task will be to provide guidance and support to you outside the classroom and help you address various academic issues you will face, especially in weeks 1-5.

Please find below the list of guidelines which the Academic Office recommends to be followed during the mentoring process:

- Commit to be in contact with the mentor for maximum 5-8 hours per month (approximately 1 hour/week) based on your needs.
- Inform the mentor about the goals you want to achieve in this process. It is up to you to establish the priorities.
- Be willing to communicate with the mentor, and request assistance with getting into your online classes in weeks 1-2, eCompanion, especially looking at the syllabus, assignments due and gradebook.
- Schedule a tutoring session with a designated Tutoring Professor, if the mentor can't help you with an academic issue. The session can be schedules by contacting the Academic Office at (610)491-3211
- Establish with the mentor the way to keep in touch: via phone, email or in person.

Ir

request support in the study process.

- ❖ Show your appreciation for the efforts made by the mentor.
- ❖ Provide feedback to the mentor on your mentoring experience.
- ❖ Thanks for being part of this program!!

Professor McGeehan

Appendix B: Mentor Interview and Application Questions

Mentor's name: _____

Application Questions

Please answer all of the following questions as completely as possible. If more space is needed, write on the back of this page.

1. **Why do you want to help?**

2. **How do you intend to help the mentee? List 3-4 ways in which you will help.**

3. **Are you a good listener? Can you be supportive of your mentee by listening and offering constructive advice?**

4. **Did you ever have a mentor? On the job or in school?**

5. **Would you have liked a mentor when you first started as a student? Why or why not?**

6. **How can you help your mentee with his/her online learning? Do you have a computer at home?**

7. **Are you familiar with APA style? Can you help your mentee with basic writing information?**

8. **What problems did you have with your classes when you started as a student?**

9. **Do you agree with the framework of the program? Can you meet with your mentee at least once a week and report back on your meetings?**

10. **Do you have any overall questions or comments regarding the mentor program?**

Appendix C: Mentee Opening Survey

Mentee's name: _____

Survey Questions

Please answer all of the following questions as completely as possible. If more space is needed, write on the back of this page.

1. **Why do you want a mentor?**

2. **How and in which subjects do you need help?**

3. **What study skills aids would help? Do you have a computer at home? How are your computer skills?**

4. **What is your greatest need as a new student?**

5. **Have you had a mentor before? Why or why not?**

6. **List some ways your mentor can help you.**

7. **What is your greatest fear as a new student?**

8. **In the past, what has caused you to succeed or fail as a student?**

9. **Do you agree with the framework of the program? Can you meet with your mentor at least once a week?**

10. **Do you have any overall questions or comments regarding the program?**

Mentor/Mentee Profile Sheet

Student's Last Name _____

Student's First Name _____

Major/Degree_____

Interested to be:

Mentor ☐ **Mentee** ☐

Contact Information

Email _____

Phone _____

Time available for meeting with the mentor/mentee:

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

<u>To be completed by the Mentee</u>

Subjects/issues needing help in: _____

_____

_____

Mentoring Progress Report/monthly update

This form should be completed by the mentor at the end of each month and emailed to C. P. .plesca@XYZ.edu.

Mentor's Name _____

Mentee's Name _____

What issues have been discussed _____

_____

What solution has been offered?_____

_____

Ongoing issues:_____

Further actions to be done? Require tutoring. _____

_____

Require assistance on behalf of a Full Time Faculty.

Yes **No**

Mentor's Contact Information

Email _____

Phone _____

Please note the following: If there are any issues or concerns arising during your mentoring session, you should contact immediately the Academic Office at (610)491-3211.

Mentor's Initials _____

Mentor/Mentee Matching Form

Mentor's name :_____

Mentor's contact information:

Phone:_____

Email:_____

Mentee's name:_____

Mentee's contact information:

Phone:_____

Email:_____

FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS PEER MENTORING DIANE MCGEEHAN

1. **Discuss any issues that you had with your mentees this quarter.**

2. **Share some of the problems that your mentees had and explain how those problems were resolved.**

3. **Discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the current peer mentoring program.**

4. **Explain how you might change the peer mentoring program to make it more effective for new students.**

Appendix H: Final Data Collector Mentors

Interview Questions for Mentors Serving in Program for Several Quarters
February 17, 2011

1. **How has being a mentor changed you? How do you see yourself as having benefited from the mentoring program?**

2. **Describe in detail some of the ways that you changed as you were serving as a mentor. Give examples of several mentees you helped and described how you helped them.**

3. **How has the campus environment changed since you became a mentor? Do you see students helping each other more?**

4. **What did you like most about the program? Why did you find being a mentor enjoyable?**

5. **What changes can you suggest for the mentoring program in the future?**

Appendix I: Final Data Collector Mentees

Name_____ Mentor _____

Interview Questions for Mentees Serving in Program for Several Quarters/April – May 2011

1. **How has having a mentor changed you? How do you see yourself as having benefited from the mentoring program?**

2. **Describe in detail some of the ways that you changed as you were working with your mentor. Give examples of how you were helped and describe how you changed.**

3. **How has the campus environment changed since you became a mentee? Do you see students helping each other more?**

4. **What did you like most about the program? Why did you find having a mentor enjoyable?**

5. **What changes can you suggest for the mentoring program in the future?**

Appendix J: Field Notes Sample

Winter 2010 Cycle Two January 11 to March 29
Prior to Week One: NSOs 1/5 I recruited one new mentee.
1/7 C. P. and I met with 3 new mentees at a ABC New Student Orientation. 1/9 C. P. met and presented info about peer mentoring program.

Week 1:

1/11 I met with A. T. F; C. P. gave her new mentees. Later I met with D. L. and gave new mentees. Afterward I met with C. P. and began to track mentees from last quarter to see their grades at the end of the pilot program.
1/14 I decided to not micro-manage mentors and mentees and the Business Club. When I reached campus, I met with C. P. and planned mentor meeting. C. P. and I decided to share notes about first focus group and have early meeting. C. P. is very proactive about helping with program and actively involved with mentoring her own mentees. Early mentors are very enthusiastic about the program and anxious to help their mentees but they are also busy with their own classes and jobs. It is difficult for some of them to balance work, school, and mentoring.

Week 2

1/18 I received a phone call from A. B. about permission to work on the mentoring program. She was very receptive to the program and said I could present information about this at the annual spring faculty meeting in Virginia. Due to various factors, this did not occur, but I was able to present to the Philadelphia region deans and faculty to expand the program. At this point, I decided to revise the original mentoring slides to present to a wider audience.
1/19 D. L. has not contacted mentees yet except via email. I gave him their phone numbers and told him to call them this week. D. L. currently has problems focusing and can easily become agitated if given too much to do at the same time. He is not good at multi-tasking and is often distracted when given more than one task to do. C. P. and I met and decided to contact all mentees to be sure that they were in touch with their mentors.
1/20 I met with all mentors, including one new one, as a focus group. Everyone had good comments. I suggested contacting all their mentees via phone, not just emailing. A brief meeting was held to introduce all students with Wednesday night classes to the peer mentoring program and clubs available to them. Two students volunteered to become mentors. Two students requested mentors and filled out the initial paperwork. One of the most time-consuming aspects of the entire project is filling out paperwork and making sure that files are maintained.

This week I decided to keep a daily log of all mentoring activities as a way to track what is being done. I also have individual folders with semester data and C. P. is maintaining separate records in the LRC with several peer mentoring binders. By doing this I am using triangulation, collecting data from several vantage points, plus touching base daily and weekly with mentors and mentees as I see them on campus. I am also collecting scholarly articles on peer mentoring to use at club meetings to share with mentors and gather ideas about how they can become better mentors.
1/23 This was the date for the annual XYZ party for faculty and deans in the Philadelphia area. It had been postponed from December due to snow. I met for over an hour with Professor S. from the DEF campus to discuss setting up peer mentoring and clubs at her

campus. We discussed the type of club, how to recruit students to mentor, and set up a date to meet at DEF to begin going over the paperwork she will need to start the club. Professor S. is very receptive and excited to be part of the mentoring project. She will need some help setting up the program, and D. L. has volunteered to go to DEF with me to explain the mentoring from

Week 3

1/25 I conducted a conference call during which I explained the peer mentoring program to Region 5 ACDs. I was given approximately 30 minutes to describe how to create the clubs and recruit both mentors and mentees. Dean G., the regional dean, was also present for the conference call. Afterward, I compiled fact sheets to send to interested campus deans to solicit their help as well.

1/26 and 1/27 I received multiple positive emails about the peer mentoring program from top XYZ academic officials and working on getting IRB approval finalized.

1/28 I met with C and updated information on this quarter's mentors and mentees. Later at the campus, I also touched base with D. L. and A. T.

1/29-30 I was selected for the Graduate Student Honor Society at Rowan, Alpha Epsilon Lamda (AEL). After two months, I turned down work on new English class, BCOM, since it is a scripted course and much more demanding of my time. I was told that I would be compensated but was not. I am learning to say no to projects that I do not have time for. I am also learning to be a better listener. To me, these are both traits of a great servant leader.

Week 4

2/1 I met with C. P. who said her mentees were okay but needed help with their online classes. She is working with them both in person and via phone. C. P. is strongly behind the program; she helps to co-ordinate the information flow between mentors and mentees, and she enjoys working with other students on campus as well.

2/2 I am working hard to make the peer mentoring program successful. It is important to keep moving ahead with my project, now that the parameters and guidelines are in place.

2/3 D. L. has contacted both of his mentees and is actively helping them. I sent Prof. S the paperwork to begin setting up a club and peer mentoring at DEF. We will pick a time to meet at her campus and go over what she needs to do. I have asked D. L. to come with me to help explain what peer mentors do and serve as a support system for her.

2/4 When I went into the open computer lab this afternoon, I saw peer mentor T. G. working with her mentee. Both were actively engaged with online learning.TG has devoted herself to helping this student through his first semester. She has given him a tour of the campus, recommended study skills, and given him a road map for success for this quarter's classes and beyond. TG is a graduate student in the MBA program. Later I met with C and we worked on compiling data about the mentors/mentees so far. We planned joint meetings of the three clubs. Also I gave a presentation to the Thursday night classes on how to write a paper and find credible sources. C. P. was the co-presenter. Her speaking and presentation skills have greatly expanded, and she has become much more confident and self-assured since working in the mentor program.

2/5 and 2/6 Snow storm so I stayed at home and went over peer mentoring concepts and read over some peer mentoring literature.

Week 5

2/8 I met with D. L. and gave him the online help desk number for one of his mentees who was having problems with an online professor. D. L. is being very proactive this quarter and actually enjoys helping his mentees in many areas. Later I saw A. T. F. in student services who said that she was having trouble reaching her mentees and I suggested emailing them with study advice, since this is midterm week.
2/9 At the campus I took a tour of the Learning Center, looked over the books, and asked about magazine holdings.
2/10 Another major snow fall leaves me at home, so I worked on the peer mentoring journal and read more articles on mentoring. There are many interesting articles.
2/11 Today was another snow day, so I looked over the Rowan assigned books on coding and focus groups; very helpful for my research. The codes I have already set up on the interviews for mentors and mentees are a good start.
2/12 I am reading through the Craig book on action research essentials. The third chapter on Literature Reviews is most interesting, as is the section on organizing the review itself. Corbin-Straus discusses how to begin analyzing data in chapter three.

Week 6

2/15 Hope to use mentoring program to create more positive atmosphere on campus between students and faculty.
2/16 I have asked the LRC manager to order Fullan's book on *Changing Higher Education*. I also went online and looked at Rowan's Peer Mentoring Program and asked about Bucks County Community College's mentoring program.
2/17 I discussed my peer mentoring project on a conference call with Dr. D. and other classmates.
2/18 C and I worked for two hours setting up a recognition program to honor graduates at ABC campus and then discussed peer mentoring program with attendees. During 7 pm break time between Thursday evening classes, I met with A. T. F. and two other mentor. Also recruited two new mentors for next quarter and asked student to join Business Club. I attended the New Student Orientation with two students who were not interested in peer mentors.
2/20 Dennis and I went to the Lower Bucks campus and I found six articles on peer mentoring to add to my lit review. I also looked over Fullan and Argyris' change theories to apply to my leadership chapter.
2/21 I purchased journals for original group of peer mentors. I am taking them to campus next week and will ask the mentors to record their thoughts and impressions on what is working with the mentoring program so far and what they have learned about themselves.

Week 7

2/22 I gave out two journals to peer mentors. D. L. was excited to receive his journal and promised to write in it on a regular basis. C. P. said she thought having mentors keep journals was a good idea. I should have thought of this at the beginning of the quarter but this also seems to be the logical time to ask others to keep journals as I am doing.
2/23 More snow predicted; hard to concentrate but I kept reading over peer mentoring articles.
2/24 I decided to take peer mentoring articles to campus and share them with mentors during regular club meetings. This was a successful idea; they enjoyed discussing how other mentoring programs have worked at other educational institutions.

2/25 Since it snowed again, I did not go to campus; I had hoped to interview C about her progress with mentees this quarter. I still need to give out journals to A. T. F., T. G. and new mentor. All but one mentor are women. Mentees this quarter are both men and women. I have not made any effort to match mentors or mentees by age or sex, relying on all mentors to be flexible and capable of working with whomever they are assigned with.
2/26 More snow so time to reflect on program. I am looking for more peer mentoring articles. I need to continually recruit more mentors and mentees.
2/27 I am reading Corbin and Strauss *Basics* and finding interesting data on context (p. 88) and matrix (p. 91), process (p. 97), conceptualizing process (99), also refining theory (p. 109).
2/28 I spent time rereading Morgan *Focus Groups.* Also looked over Craig *Action Research Essentials* on coding processes and types of coding (pp. 189 ff) and pp. 190-91.

Week 8

3/1 I gave out two more mentor journals and asked them to write down their own observations about the mentoring program. Going around the campus, I met with three mentors for five minute conferences about their mentees; all three said they were doing well and making progress with their students.
3/2 I presented the peer mentoring program at the Student Recognition ceremony. Three more students volunteered to be mentors, and I gave them the initial survey forms and collected their contact data. One is a woman who wants to help online students. The other two are men, both of whom want to help with online students as well. Interviewed older man at length; he wants to help other students become successful online students.
3/4 I worked for an hour to update the mentoring folder with C. P. and planned an end of the quarter recognition ceremony for the first group of mentors and mentees. I found an excellent article on peer mentoring to share with mentors at club meeting next week. I saw T. G. and gave her a journal to write in; she is doing well with her two mentees.
3/5 and 3/6 I went to Rowan class and worked on coding information collected in my mentoring program. I also decided to work on brief case studies of initial mentors to add depth to my research.

Week 9

3/8 In English 240 class, D. L. recommends new mentor, K., who becomes very active with club activities. K. will create signs for the campus food drive, joins the executive committee of the Business Club, and is active in the club for the next three quarters.
3/9 I received an email from new online mentor, N, who asks about attending this Saturday's NSO and later emails me with more questions about the program.
3/11 Focus group meeting with Business Club and mentors: D. L., A. T. F., C. P., T. G. C. P. typed notes. We all discuss peer mentoring article, the progress the mentees were making, and they promised to keep notes in their journals as well.
3/12-14 I read more peer mentoring articles, took notes, and wrote in my journal.

Week 10

3/15 I worked on more data collection at campus. C. P. is proving to be a valuable resource for the peer mentoring program as she helps with data collection, co-ordinates data collection, attends the New Student Orientations each quarter to present the mentoring program.
3/17 A. T. F. is not able to help one of her mentees, P., who has already not passed several classes from a previous quarter. He asked several times to be part of the

mentoring program but has not been receptive to any of A. T. F.'s advice on how to be a successful student. ATF is feeling somewhat upset but understand that all mentees will not be as receptive to her advice as she might hope.
3/18 I met with C. P. to schedule workshops and club activities for next quarter (spring). Later I met with D. L. to discuss his work with mentees this quarter. D. L. feels he has become much more positive and outgoing as a result of his working with his mentees this quarter. I asked him to put these thoughts in his mentoring journal.
3/19 I received a phone call from Professor S. I will be meeting her at her campus next Friday to facilitate setting up clubs and mentoring. In two weeks I will go to another campus to discuss mentoring with faculty there.

Week 11

3/22 C. P. gave me a list of the newest mentors to invite to upcoming New Student Orientations so they can meet the incoming students and help to present the program. Then I had a brief meeting with D. L., who is going to check with his mentees to see what help they need with their final exams. I send out an email to all peer mentors to check with their mentees for any issues during final exam week.
3/23 I had a brief meeting in the open lab with a mentee helped by D. L. who received high marks on a paper.
3/24 I met separately with two prospective new mentors, P. P. and A. P., both undergraduate women. I will give them the necessary paperwork to fill out. C. P. and I conducted a workshop on Women's History.
3/25/26 I worked on data collection for mentors/mentees.
3/27 I presented the mentoring program at the New Student Orientation at ABC and recruited six new mentees for next quarter's program.
3/28 I continued to read more articles on peer mentoring and worked on my literature review.